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President: Mr. Opertti . . . . (Uruguay)

The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

Agenda item 24 *(continued)*

Implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s, including measures and recommendations agreed upon at its mid-term review

Progress report of the Secretary-General (A/53/390 and Add.1)

Mr. Azaiez (Tunisia) *(interpretation from French)*: The delegation of Tunisia, which associates itself with the statement made by Indonesia on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, would like to share some remarks on agenda item 24, on the implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (UN-NADAF), including measures and recommendations agreed upon at its mid-term review.

I should like first of all to pay tribute to the interest shown by the international community in the development and growth of Africa. UN-NADAF has crystallized the commitment of the United Nations to the economic emancipation of the continent.

This programme constitutes a renewal of the commitment of the Member States of the Organization to support African development efforts. For all the African States it is a sign of faith and hope that, despite the vicissitudes of the international situation and the difficulties of our time, encourages them in their struggle for development.

Consideration of this item by the General Assembly allows us to take stock of progress made since the mid-term review two years ago. It also gives us an opportunity to identify the major difficulties confronting the implementation of the New Agenda and to re-examine our approach in planning new measures prior to the review and final assessment in 2002.

The periodic review of UN-NADAF thus allows us better to target the goals to be achieved and, if necessary, to adjust our sights if the economic situation of African States remains fragile overall, and even if Africa appears to be starting on the road to recovery.

Indeed, for the first time in more than two decades, per capita income throughout the continent rose in 1995. This trend continued in 1996 and, to a lesser extent, in 1997.

Without being excessively optimistic, as some have been, it can be noted that this improvement is accompanied by a notable decrease in inflation and a reduction in budgetary deficits. For some African countries this is also accompanied by an increase in foreign direct investment flows.

The results achieved have been brought about by better budgetary discipline, the implementation of good macroeconomic policy, the restructuring of banking and

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financial systems and regulations and the strengthening of the capability and transparency of administrative and judicial institutions.

Thus, analysing the issue of the use of domestic resources together with the continent-wide economic reforms, the report of the Secretary-General (A/53/390) points out that 22 countries in Africa now have agreements with the Extended Structural Adjustment Facility of the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The report adds that these structural reforms have been multisectoral. They have been aimed at the development of the agricultural sector, diversification of exports, strengthening the role of fisheries and forestry, improving and rationalizing the civil service and increasing the output of the energy sector.

The programmes of reform and structural adjustment in which the countries of Africa are engaged have thus combined measures for domestic economic and trade liberalization, improvement of financial management, expansion of the tax base and modernization of the effectiveness and transparency of the taxation system.

Also regarding reforms, and aware of the primary role of civil society in ensuring the success of any measures for recovery, the African countries have stepped up the democratization process and the strengthening of the network of civil organizations within the framework of good governance.

Whether we speak of economic reform, the promotion of the private sector and foreign direct investment or of the intensification and strengthening of the democratic structures of society, all these efforts are aimed at the establishment of a more attractive environment for capital flows and official development assistance.

The progress report of the Secretary-General on the mobilization of additional resources for African development (A/53/390/Add.1) would, however, seem to indicate that the African countries have not succeeded in reversing the negative trend and that the continent still is not particularly attractive for foreign investors. Indeed, the document notes that the net flows of resources destined for Africa have decreased and also that the donor countries have reduced their loans. Furthermore, the latter are counting on the private sector to provide the developing countries with the financing they need.

What is more disconcerting is that the decline in Africa's share in this dwindling aid has come at a time when Africa's economic growth was in fact picking up, following major reform measures implemented by the African countries. As a result, the report concludes, the issue of resource flows to Africa is an ongoing concern for the United Nations and for the international community.

It is quite clear here that the magnitude of the problem and the complexity of the obstacles the continent must overcome to build the underpinnings of its infrastructure and its socio-economic development require considerably greater resolve and greater dedication of resources, at both the national and international levels, to guarantee Africa, like other regions of the world, sustained and lasting growth and development.

It must however be recognized that the action being taken at present, both by the industrialized countries and by the United Nations system, is far from commensurate with the problems facing Africa. These shortcomings are clear in official development assistance, in investments and in the treatment of the debt problem.

The same progress report of the Secretary-General points out that the greater share of private capital flows for the developing countries has in fact not reached the African countries, which received only 3.4 per cent of the total in 1992 and 2.7 per cent in 1996.

The marginalization of Africa in the area of direct foreign investment is comparable to its marginalization in global trade. This situation is of particular concern.

The progress report also notes that over-indebtedness is one of the major obstacles to economic recovery and sustainable growth in Africa. Indeed, it is the African countries that, among the developing countries, have the greatest external debt in terms of the ratio of external debt to gross domestic product and its debt service ratio.

Recent progress in the international strategy of debt relief for the heavily indebted poor countries will undoubtedly make itself felt, but clearly there will be a need to do even more for middle-income African countries.

In this context, we believe that urgent measures should be taken designed to enhance the flow of capital towards the countries of Africa. These measures should be accompanied by relief for the external debt burden of the African countries, thus allowing them to move from the stage of adjustment to that of development.

It is the duty of the international community to support the efforts made by Africa to diversify its economy and thus allow its people no longer to be dependent on the exports of one or two commodities for which prices fluctuate depending on the market.

In this respect, I would like to refer to the report of the Secretary-General on estimates of resource requirements for the implementation of UN-NADAF, which emphasizes in its conclusion that

> "the rigid international economic environment, the domestic economic hardship and the lukewarm disposition of some creditors to adopt radical measures have constituted obstacles to the mobilization of financial resources and to the development of Africa". (*A/51/228/Add.1, para. 53*)

The same document also states,

> "Nor can Africans and the international community afford to see yet another international initiative for Africa's socio-economic recovery and development fail." (ibid.)

In endorsing this conclusion and expressing its appreciation for the numerous initiatives for Africa stressed by the Secretary-General's report on the implementation of UN-NADAF, Tunisia would like in particular to hail the efforts made by the Government of Japan to help Africa, which were crystallized in the Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD) and TICAD II, which the capital of Japan hosted a few days ago.

Finally, regarding the growing number of programmes for Africa, my delegation would like to emphasize the need for drawing up an approach that would take up the question of sustainable development of the continent in a global and harmonious framework. That vision could, at the same time, maintain the individuality and independence of the programmes. It is necessary to create a synergy between the international and bilateral initiatives under way in order to ensure their success, optimize their results and focus them on priority areas identified by the African countries themselves.

Mr. Ka (Senegal) (*interpretation from French*): My delegation associates itself with the statement made this morning by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, and with the statements to be made later in the debate by the representative of Nigeria on behalf of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and by the representative of Burkina Faso on behalf of the group of African States.

Eight years ago, the General Assembly adopted resolution 46/151, which established the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (UN-NADAF), following the failure of the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development, which had been adopted four years earlier.

On the principle that responsibility for African development lies with Africans themselves, the New Agenda defined a compact under which Africa and the international community made specific commitments. For their part, the African countries were to undertake a series of political and economic reforms intended to promote and strengthen democratization, to mobilize internal resources in order to lay the foundations for sustained economic growth, to incorporate environmental and demographic elements into their development policies, and to pursue the process of regional and subregional economic cooperation and integration.

The international community in turn undertook to support those efforts by adopting concrete measures to resolve the problem of indebtedness, to mobilize additional resources for official development assistance, to support the diversification of African economies, to bolster regional economic integration, and to reduce or even eliminate tariff and non-tariff barriers affecting the export of African products.

Those in essence were the terms of the shared responsibility under UN-NADAF as outlined in resolution 46/151 and its annex.

The mid-term review conducted at the fifty-first session unambiguously acknowledged the sustained endeavours of African countries over the preceding decade both on the political level, with a further broadening of the democratic experience, and on the economic level, with implementation of strict structural adjustment programmes with social consequences that were at times hard to endure. Those efforts were coupled with the progressive development of an internal climate conducive to the spread of national private initiative and direct foreign investment.

For the great majority of African countries, the time has come to expand the policy of liberalization, the simplification of administrative procedures and fiscal reform.

Here, the report of the Secretary-General contained in documents A/53/390 and A/53/390/Add.1 detects encouraging signs in the analysis of the progress made by Africa. We note with interest the emergence of a number of components of what has been called the African renaissance, which is marked by a considerable reduction in budget deficits, an average annual growth rate of 4 per cent to 5 per cent, increased budget allocations to the social sectors, and cuts in military expenditures.

Continent-wide, in addition to the process of integration introduced with the entry into force of the Abuja Treaty establishing the African Economic Community, the promotion of peace and stability remains a high priority for Africa, as reflected in the OAU Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution. But these achievements should not be the trees that prevent us from seeing the forest. African economic recovery, while most discernible, remains fragile when viewed in the light of what remains to be done. A few of the areas that are of continued concern to African leaders are combatting poverty, mobilizing domestic savings, providing basic social services such as health and education for all and controlling population growth. These concerns are compounded by the threat of marginalization resulting from globalization. In this connection it is easy to see Africa's growing fragility; today, Africa's share of world trade is stagnating at the very low level of some 2 per cent in spite of efforts by Africans to make their economies competitive.

What can one say about the contribution of the international community in terms of support for UN-NADAF? The facts paint a rather unsatisfactory picture in at least three crucial areas. The first is the debt problem. For nearly all African countries, the debt burden remains a very serious obstacle to economic recovery efforts. Taking 1995 as a reference year, the report of the Secretary-General on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa notes that

> "To service this debt fully, African countries would have had to pay to donors and external commercial lenders more than 60 per cent ... [of] revenues generated from their exports." (*A/52/871, para. 93*)

The objectives of the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Debt Initiative are commendable, but the Initiative remains limited in terms of conditions for eligibility, modalities for implementation and inadequacy of funding. In fact, only a comprehensive approach can be significant in satisfactorily addressing the African indebtedness as a whole.

The second area is the mobilization of resources. It must be said that the continuous decline in official development assistance to unprecedentedly low levels does not conform at all to the terms of reference of UN-NADAF. It is proper to acknowledge and welcome the efforts made by specific developed countries that have reached or even exceeded the goal of allocating 0.7 per cent of gross national product for official development assistance. But overall, the mobilization of resources remains one of the main weaknesses in the implementation of UN-NADAF, especially since Africa has thus far attracted only a very small share of direct private investment.

Lastly, in the area of trade, the steady erosion of the preferential margins accorded to developing countries under the Generalized System of Preferences results in huge losses in export income, thus adding to their trade deficits.

The 1998 *World Economic and Social Survey* also indicates in this regard that in several countries, adjustments in foreign trade, far from expanding income and employment, have on the contrary caused them to shrink. Africa is not immune to this worrisome assessment.

The debt problem, the low level of resource mobilization and unequal trade: the approach taken to these three major issues will determine the success or failure of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s when it is evaluated. There are ways to resolve them; all that is needed is the political will. The international community has risen to more complex challenges.

Ranging from the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development (UNPAAERD) to UN-NADAF, and including the United Nations Special System-wide Initiative on Africa, advocacy for Africa has taken several different forms over the past decade. The time is ripe for action in a spirit of partnership, because ultimately Africa's recovery will benefit not only Africans but also their partners in terms of investment opportunities and capturing market share.

This is Senegal's understanding of partnership for development. We must meet and come together in a process of give and take. Let us then all join together to ensure that when it comes time for the final review of UN-NADAF, it is spared UNPAAERD's unenviable outcome.

Mr. Baali (Algeria) (*interpretation from French*): Two weeks after the conclusion of the extensive and fruitful debate that the Assembly devoted to the general situation in Africa and to consideration of the far-ranging report of the Secretary-General on the causes of conflict in Africa, the Assembly is again focusing its attention on that continent, which is courageously facing up to a plethora of complex challenges and which, we are convinced, has the capacities and means necessary for its recovery.

Indeed, our Organization's interest in Africa dates back longer than just a few weeks or months. It is reflected in the many initiatives that have been launched by the United Nations system, in particular by the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank and even by the General Assembly itself, as in the case of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (UN-NADAF). We are considering today the implementation status of the New Agenda and the modalities for relaunching it on a fresh basis, in the light of the Secretary-General's often wise and specific recommendations.

It is important to recall at the outset that when it was launched, UN-NADAF was proposed, submitted and accepted as a genuine partnership agreement between Africa and the international community. The African countries acknowledged that they bore the primary responsibility for their own development. For its part, the international community undertook to support Africa's efforts, in particular through the effective promotion of an international environment conducive to the recovery and accelerated development of the continent.

The mid-term review of the implementation of this 1996 agreement led us to make two major observations that remain fully valid and relevant today. The first one is that the African countries, despite the endless difficulties confronting them, have demonstrated beyond the shadow of a doubt their effective commitment to that partnership by embarking on bold, though socially costly, political and economic reforms designed to promote democracy and a state of law and to improve and liberalize their economies by giving the private sector a greater role in their development policies.

Secondly, the support provided by Africa's partners for the efforts of the Africans has been inadequate — and even, in the end, negative — in particular in the areas of foreign debt and of official development assistance.

This dual observation is largely justified and has been confirmed in the important recommendations made following the mid-term review, which formally, and with an increased sense of urgency, reminded the international community of its responsibilities vis-à-vis Africa.

Likewise, the progress report that the Secretary-General submitted to us today (A/53/390 and Add.1), and his tireless efforts to place Africa at the top of the list of priorities of the international agenda, confirm the need for enhanced support to Africa from the international community in this recovery effort.

However, it would be wrong to minimize or ignore the efforts already made by some of Africa's partners in many areas, in particular through official development assistance, debt relief or the opening of markets to African exports. It is true, however, that these efforts are still clearly insufficient in view of the enormous needs of the continent and its development imperatives.

Africa is facing a continual decline in official development assistance, and its debt burden — which in 1996 represented 67 per cent of the gross national product — is suffocating. Africa is also contending with a very limited and poorly allocated flow of foreign direct investment, a strong dependence and an extreme vulnerability in the area of commodities, a minuscule rate of participation in world trade, and rock-bottom social development indicators. Clearly, the African continent is hobbled by considerable handicaps that are impeding its efforts to lay a solid and lasting foundation for its development process.

While certain African countries have registered positive achievements, it is clear that the 4 per cent average recorded in 1997 for the entire continent is still far from the 6 to 8 per cent required for the development of the continent. The international community's commitment to Africa must remain strong.

Africa must first and foremost rely on itself, and it is doing so with great faith and determination. But at this critical juncture of the development of international economic relations, in which a frenzied globalization that knows no rules or bounds is rendering it more fragile and vulnerable, it must also benefit from the support of its partners throughout the world so that its recovery is not jeopardized but supported, in a manner that will allow its necessary and inevitable integration into the world economy to take place gradually and fairly painlessly.

Two major themes in the relations between Africa and its partners should continue to command our attention in this context: resource mobilization and the coordination of the multiple initiatives on the continent.

Regarding the mobilization of resources, it is worth emphasizing that while Africa is aware of the work it must do on the domestic level, the means to do it have been reduced. This is because domestic savings have objective limits that depend first and foremost on the balance of trade with the rest of the world, and because this trade is so pathetic, it obviously does not provide the means for dealing with the enormous needs for development financing. Therefore, given the lack of external support in the form of official development assistance, massive foreign direct investment and concessional capital flows, the situation regarding the mobilization of resources is not likely to improve, and the prospects for development and recovery will thus be negatively impacted.

As for the multilateral and bilateral initiatives in support of the continent, we are pleased that they are many and varied. Nevertheless, as the Secretary-General himself points out in his report, at least for the moment their lack of effect stands in contrast to their number. Therefore, it seems to us that there needs to be a major effort to coordinate and harmonize these initiatives, including those of the United Nations system, so as to derive the greatest possible benefit from them and to avoid squandering the means and resources of which Africa has such great need.

The sectors in which UN-NADAF seems to be stalled or losing momentum are the very ones that the Secretary-General identified in his report on the causes of conflict in Africa and for which he called upon the international community to provide support. While awaiting the final evaluation of the implementation of UN-NADAF, expected in 2002, it is essential that this support crystallize quickly and that the solidarity of the international community not merely be limited to declarations of intent.

For its part, Africa is determined to continue to take charge and redouble its efforts to succeed in entering the new millennium and becoming integrated into the global economy, so as to ensure for future generations the living conditions and security to which they have the right, and so that the continent can take its rightful place in the council of nations of the world.

Mr. Kafando (Burkina Faso) (*interpretation from French*): The Secretary-General has submitted to us a remarkable progress report on this important issue before us today: the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s, including measures and recommendations agreed upon at its mid-term review. We would like to congratulate him and all the experts who assisted him in mastering such a difficult and delicate subject.

It has now been two years since we conducted the mid-term review of the implementation of this programme — two years during which the global environment has undergone profound changes, not the least of which is the unprecedented crisis that today is shaking the foundations of international economic and financial cooperation. The challenges of globalization and liberalization of the economy — already so difficult to meet for developing countries as a whole — are even greater no doubt for the African countries, most of which are numbered among the least developed countries. It is in this context of economic depression that we should today approach the issue of the development of the continent on the eve of the twenty-first century.

The mid-term review has provided a means for calling attention to the large and often painful sacrifices made by the African countries since the beginning of the decade in their quest for a better future for the African peoples, and also a means of stressing the slow pace at which part of the international community is meeting its share of the responsibility it assumed in this regard.

To give new impetus to economic growth and to the lasting development of Africa, pertinent recommendations have been made to African States, our partners and the United Nations system. Of course we are still a long way from the final assessment, which will only be drafted in 2002, at the time of the final review and evaluation. But it is nonetheless still possible to glean the main trends to date in the actions of all the various actors since 1996.

We have stated repeatedly that the African countries are the first and the main architects of their own destiny. Aware of this fact, these countries have always implemented the most difficult initiatives and undertaken the essential political and economic reforms, with a view to bringing about a stable, sound and thus forward-looking domestic climate.

Thus, to reinforce their capacities, they have enhanced the integration of women into the development process, strengthened agricultural development and environmental protection, further diversified their exports, improved energy sector earnings, strengthened the effectiveness and transparency of their fiscal systems, rationalized their public administration, promoted the private sector and intensified diplomatic processes. These are absolute priorities in their development programmes. Further, their commitment to regional and subregional cooperation and integration is more visible than ever — the achievement of these objectives being considered the first and most important stage in eliminating trade barriers and giving the continent effective access to the opportunities of the global market.

But despite all of this, the basic problems remain because nearly 300 million Africans still live below the poverty line. One quarter of the children do not have access to schooling; for half of our populations potable water remains a luxury; and health for all in the year 2000 is still just a slogan.

We have a clear awareness of our part of the responsibility for this state of affairs, and accepting this responsibility, we are firmly resolved to redouble our efforts to place Africa on the path towards true endogenous development, provided that the international community helps us in dealing with certain economic and above all structural obstacles that greatly handicap us in this undertaking. Basically those obstacles are: globalization, the debt burden and the drying up of assistance.

It has by now been established that Africa is the continent in which the effects of globalization are the most vicious and bitterly felt. The Secretary-General most aptly recalls this in his report:

> "Generally, globalization tends to intensify the marginalization of those countries without the capacity to increase exports or to attract investment rapidly.
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> "In the case of Africa, globalization in the short term has led to significant marginalization of the continent. Africa's exports remain narrowly based on primary commodities, and little progress has been made in diversifying into non-traditional exports, especially manufactures." (*A/53/390, paras. 87 and 88*)

The gravity of the situation could not be better expressed.

And what can I say about the debt burden, this ball and chain that, if we are not careful, could forever frustrate all of our efforts towards economic recovery and thus perpetuate the vicious circle of dependency? Aware of the importance of this dynamic, the Secretary-General in his report on the cause of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa has made most relevant recommendations for how to deal with it.

Together with this, other initiatives, some of which showed their limitations early on, were launched, but without success.

However, the only viable solution for Africa remains the simple cancellation of the debt stock, and the poorest countries should be given this benefit as soon as possible.

The third obstacle, and not the least, is the decline in resources allotted to development. It is not only that the rate of domestic savings is insufficient but also that the rate of investment remains low, well below the level needed for satisfactory growth. Furthermore, Africa's share in the total net flow of resources to developing countries has been diminishing from year to year in a disturbing way.

These realities, to which the Secretary-General draws attention in document A/53/390/Add.1, should alone have prompted a decisive reaction by the international community, which is at times ready to act to contain less dangerous crises. These realities should have reminded the international community of the commitments undertaken at the time of the establishment of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (UN-NADAF), which were reaffirmed in 1996 when we renewed our common political will to implement the New Agenda.

Thus, we are somewhat surprised to see the dwindling of official development assistance, which is the only source of financing that, a priori, does not require reimbursement. This is all the more inexplicable since African countries, through their courageous reforms, have achieved goals that should logically have encouraged an increase in official development assistance. One can therefore wonder whether there is a genuine will to finance development in Africa.

This does not mean that we do not recognize the sincere and manifest commitment of certain countries whose policies in resolute support of cooperation for development have allowed them to reach, and even exceed, the goal of 0.7 per cent of gross national product for official development assistance. We are deeply grateful to them, on behalf of the men and women whose daily existence was improved thanks to the inestimable contribution of these friends.

To reverse the present trend in the area of assistance, the Secretary-General is recommending solutions that we fully support.

The fate of UN-NADAF is also in the hands of the United Nations system, whose capacity for coordination and mobilization in this regard is crucial. Nevertheless, the time has come for the United Nations system to undertake a thorough and objective analysis of all the agendas, initiatives and plans and programmes of action for Africa, which continue to multiply, and the apparent spontaneity of a number of them could lead us to think of fads and opportunism.

It is important to clarify the ties between UN-NADAF and the Secretary-General's report on the causes of conflict in Africa. This would have the advantage of avoiding the acrobatics we had to do to make the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative on Africa the instrument for implementing the New Agenda. At the global level, the need for harmonization of initiatives is also imperative, lest their impact be reduced to a minimum.

The new partnership we desire must be oriented towards the real needs of Africans and the priorities defined by them. Such an initiative would be the cornerstone of the economic summit that Africa plans to hold in 1999 in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso. The idea of holding such a summit proves that the problems of development remain Africa's first and foremost concern.

Mr. Sharma (India): May we compliment the Secretary-General for undertaking a thorough and thought-provoking analysis of the implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (UN-NADAF). We have read the documents with great interest and believe that they must be viewed in conjunction with the Secretary-General's report on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa (A/52/871). We stated, when the General Assembly considered the latter report, that it succinctly brought out the complex interplay of factors, forces and events that have had an important bearing on developments in Africa. This applies equally to the report contained in document A/53/390 and its addendum, before us today.

Africa and India are bound by ties that reach far into history. Indeed, geo-historians tell us that India was but a part of that great continent before continental drift created the Indian Ocean. Africa and Asia have been bound by ancient and widespread commercial links, exchange of ideas and people and, in the shared experience of the colonial period, collective disempowerment, deprivation and exploitation. When we gained freedom, both India and countries of Africa faced mammoth developmental challenges.

Our first Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, referred to these shared aspirations when addressing the first Asian-African Conference at Bandung. He said,

> "We have been left behind in the race, and now we have a chance to make good. We have to make good rapidly ... [I]f not, we shall fade away, not to rise again for a long time to come. We are determined not to fail. We are determined, in the new phase of Asia and Africa, to make good."

It is this shared promise that drives us as we take the floor on issues of concern to that brotherly continent and people.

We share the views of the Secretary-General, expressed at the very beginning of his report, that one of the critical issues that hinders the implementation of the New Agenda relates to the impediments encountered in increasing financial flows to countries of Africa. We have said before that the best of intentions and goodwill have to be matched by the provision of adequate resources that not only are sufficient for the implementation of the New Agenda for the development of Africa, but that lead to a per capita growth rate in gross domestic product of over 8.6 per cent per annum, judged to be the minimum required for an effective fight against poverty in the African continent. This is indeed the crux of the problem.

Other countries around the globe have suffered from a similar situation and can easily identify with the challenges facing Africa. However, as we had occasion to state last year when commenting on the Secretary-General's report on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa, the crucial difference is that while a devastated

Europe received a generous and sustained infusion of capital under the Marshall Plan, resurgent Africa has seen prospects for its development and growth denied by a paucity of financial resources. The totality of this challenge needs to be addressed comprehensively, effectively and urgently.

Seven years ago, in 1991, we had estimated Africa's external finance requirements at $30 billion for 1992, to be followed by an annual increase of at least 4 per cent. Today, for several reasons, the needs and urgency are far greater. This concern is shared by the international community. But still, as the Secretary-General notes, the net aggregate flow of resources to the African continent continues to decline, from $28.2 billion in 1995 to $20.8 billion in 1996, representing barely one third of the total estimated requirement of $60 billion.

The African continent remains a net transferor of resources abroad in the form of net factor incomes less public grants from abroad. As a proportion of domestic savings, such transfers have amounted to over a quarter of domestic savings, which at 15.6 per cent during the period 1992-1997, are low to begin with. This results in a reduction of net domestic resources available for investment, demonstrating compellingly the critical importance of external resources for achieving accelerated investment and growth in Africa.

We have noted the emphasis on increasing the level of domestic savings and resource mobilization for growth. This is a laudable objective. Policy issues related to raising domestic savings rates have not only been an integral component of the current reform programmes, but were also an important component of the conventional development policy of the 1950s. But caution is needed lest increased domestic savings have a recessionary impact by curbing domestic demand. Furthermore, it is important to analyse the reasons for the fall in the gross domestic savings rate from 25.9 per cent in 1976-1983, to 17.7 per cent during 1984-1991, to a further 15.6 per cent in the period 1992-1997.

We need to ask whether these poor savings rates and almost continuous decline do not reflect the structural constraints of these economies. After all, there can hardly be any savings at subsistence levels. Policy options available to these countries for increasing domestic resource mobilization are also limited. It is believed that reform programmes aimed at macroeconomic stabilization, financial discipline, reduction of fiscal deficits and transparent and predictable tax regimes will usher in an economic environment in which private agents can plan their future with confidence and contribute to increased savings. But such actions, in the absence of growth, may have an adverse impact on social development. Furthermore, the psychological impact of "debt overhang", with the concomitant expectations of increased taxation in the future, is an important factor.

Development assistance represents a trickle into the African continent. It is indeed distressing to note from the reports before us that the share of African countries, and in particular the sub-Saharan African countries, in official development finance has been declining, especially at a time when these countries stand poised for growth. Donor attention appears to be diverted from the African continent. The decline is even more serious as it takes place in an overall climate of shrinking resource flows, leading to a decrease in official development assistance directed towards Africa, not only in percentage, but also in absolute terms, from $18.4 billion in 1994 to $15.4 billion in 1996. Sectoral distribution of official development assistance has also been changing, while bilateral and multilateral donors alike shift away from productive sectors and physical infrastructure projects. It is important to make social sector investments and undertake capacity-building projects in other sectors.

We support the call of the Organization of African Unity for international support, including through the United Nations system, for greater investments in the education sector. At the same time, physical infrastructure is an essential component of a viable economic environment that inspires confidence for investment and growth. We share the views of the Secretary-General, expressed in paragraph 46 of document A/53/390/Add.1, that, "without appropriate development of infrastructure, even private capital may not flow in", and that, in any case, it would be necessary to develop such sectors with public funds.

We have also noted that nearly 5 per cent of official development finance is now provided for emergency assistance. This amounts to a diversion of whatever scarce resources were available for development. Africa hosts the largest number of refugees and displaced persons in the world, which places a severe strain on the economies of the host countries. It would be essential for the international community not only to increase official development finance for Africa, but also to provide additional resources for its humanitarian and emergency needs. We therefore strongly support all the recommendations contained in the document on meeting aid targets and improving aid coordination.

Ratios of external debt to gross domestic product and a high debt-service ratio continue to characterize the economies of several African countries. Clearly, dwindling social spending is largely due to the rising claims of interest payments on public debt. As a United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) study noted last year, sub-Saharan African Governments transfer to their Northern creditors four times what they spend on health care for their people. That is when debt is not being fully serviced. In order to fully service the debt, estimated at $328.9 billion in 1995, African countries would need to earmark as much as 60 per cent of their total export earnings. As former Tanzanian President Julius Nyerere so poignantly asked: "Must we starve our children to pay our debt?"

The international community has been alive to this issue. We are happy that some of the actions recommended by the Secretary-General have already been implemented. These include the extension of the expiry date of the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Debt (HIPC) Initiative from September 1998 to the end of the year 2000 at its review in September earlier this year. We are also happy to note that another African country, Mali, apart from the four mentioned in the reports, reached the decision point last month to avail itself of debt relief under the HIPC Initiative.

We are also encouraged by the World Bank assessment that, over the coming year, another seven African countries — Chad, Ethiopia, Guinea, Mauritania, Niger, Togo and Sierra Leone — could reach decision points, though not all would be expected to require assistance under the Initiative. However, as noted by the African Finance Ministers, more flexibility needs to be shown in the application of the criteria of the ratio of total debt in net present value terms to exports and due consideration must be given to the fiscal burden of debt, so as to allow as many African countries as possible to take advantage of the facility. We also support an expeditious examination of the Secretary-General's earlier proposals to convert to grants all remaining official bilateral debt of the poorest African countries.

It is abundantly clear that most of the increase in private capital flows to developing countries has bypassed Africa. Private loans have virtually ceased for Africa and the total outstanding short-term private debt was over $6 billion less in 1997 than it was in the early years of this decade. While this may improve the debt-servicing profile, it actually demonstrates the inability of financial markets to restore normal credit relations with African countries. Similarly, the total foreign direct investment inflows into Africa have also been fluctuating and modest. By no stretch of the imagination can these flows fill the potential investment savings gap that exists in Africa. However, every little bit helps. Despite our constraints, we have therefore established a Rs 1 billion — approximately $30 million — revolving fund for Africa for promoting trade, investment and technology sharing, as well as for revitalizing our bilateral trade and investments with Africa.

Permit me to also voice our full support for the recommendations of the Secretary-General calling on capital exporting countries to eliminate any restrictions, formal or informal, on capital exports to African countries. The international community must also consider ways to reduce the volatility of capital flows, through better surveillance mechanisms, to avoid the Asian type of financial crisis.

We strongly believe that without growth there can be no sustained increase in household or Government spending, in private or public capital formation, in health or in social welfare. After all, distributive justice cannot imply distribution of poverty, just as sustainable development cannot mean sustaining conditions which keep a people in poverty and deprivation. We have noted from the report that poverty eradication is treated as a cross-cutting issue, with emphasis on the progressive use of micro-credit as a means to empower the poor. We have also read with great interest the publication entitled "Poverty eradication in Africa: selected country experiences". As the Organization of African Trade Union Unity, whose secretariat is in Ghana, points out on page 119 of that publication, in its case study,

> "Under the pretext of the ongoing globalization of the world economy, we, in Africa, have noted with dismay the absence of good global governance and management of the international economy."

Globalization represents one of the most important challenges facing Africa today. While it offers access to large financial savings, new markets and a wide range of goods and services at lower costs, it also increases the vulnerability of countries and of sections within them. In the case of Africa, it is apparent that globalization has led to the significant marginalization of the continent. We have therefore been impressed by the commitment of our partners from Africa to developing skills for understanding and directing international economic policy, so as to better serve their needs, as brought out in the studies published by the Office of the Special Coordinator for Africa and the Least Developed Countries.

Mr. Mungra (Suriname), Vice-President, took the Chair.

We welcome the activities conducted by various parts of the United Nations system to implement the New Agenda for the Development of Africa. Activities that we would like especially to mention include the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) regional initiative entitled Enterprise Africa, aimed at facilitating and coordinating support for small and medium-scale enterprises; the deposit mobilization programmes of the International Monetary Fund Institute; the promotion of informal sector employment-generating opportunities by the International Labour Organization; the assistance provided by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development and the International Trade Centre in the trade sector; the establishment by the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) of cleaner production centres in Tanzania and Zimbabwe; UNIDO's Alliance for Africa's Industrialization; the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) Special Programme for Food Security; the joint programme of rehabilitation of schools undertaken by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, UNDP and the International Foundation for Education and Self-help; the "roll back malaria" initiative of the World Health Organization; and the advocacy role of the United Nations Population Fund with parliamentarians and decision makers.

We concur on the need to promote export-led growth in Africa. Africa's share of world exports remains low, at only 2.2 per cent. Most African countries remain dependent on single commodity exports. Declining terms of trade therefore need to be effectively addressed. In fact, it has been variously estimated that as a result of the Uruguay Round of Multilateral Trade Negotiations, Africa stands to lose up to $1.2 billion every year. Many have attributed Africa's trade marginalization to the absence of transformation of production in these economies from reliance on primary products to producers of high-income-elasticity goods demanded by the world economy. In the absence of this transformation, economic management prescriptions can produce only marginal improvements in exports. Infrastructural constraints, low-value addition within Africa of its exports and lack of capital, technology and communication networks are hardly amenable to short-term policy manipulations and will require sustained investment of external resources. Furthermore, on the demand side of the equation, rising levels of protectionism in developed country markets, frequent and unjustified use of anti-dumping duties and countervailing measures, tariff escalation and tariff peaks work to negate comparative advantage and competitive advantage of enterprises. At the same time, in some ways access to markets is also a basic competitiveness issue, dependent on the stage of development and sophistication of manufacturing structures. The international community will therefore need to act in concert to ensure that market access for products and manufactured goods from Africa is available as an integrated element of the process of Africa's development.

India has always attached the highest priority to its cooperation with Africa. A primary instrument of our technical cooperation with the countries of Africa has been the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation Programme (ITEC). About 20,000 foreign nominees have received training in India under that programme in diverse fields, covering banking, foreign trade, hydrology and water resources, communications, electronics, satellite imaging, agriculture, small and medium industry, software, renewable energy sources and others. We provide a total of 1,350 training slots every year in our best institutions, and nearly 60 per cent of these are reserved for nominees from African countries. ITEC also implements technical assistance projects. They include the upgrading of hospitals and the establishment of rural health centres and an eye clinic in Ghana; the establishment of demonstration farms in Burkina Faso, including the supply of 200 tractors; office computerization work, the establishment of solar energy lighting systems and the establishment of agricultural, entrepreneurial and technical development centres in Senegal; a maternity clinic and an advanced technical demonstration centre in Namibia; technical assistance and consultancy projects in Mauritius; and feasibility studies for a small-scale industry park and for a mini-hydroelectric power plant in Uganda and for low-cost housing in Uganda and Rwanda. A manufacturing plant for poultry vaccines is also being established in Mali. An Informatics Training Centre for Africa will also be established in Zimbabwe. India has also pursued South-South cooperation through innovative modalities such as triangular cooperation. An example is the food security project in Eritrea, which will be implemented with technical assistance from India under the FAO Special Programme for Food Security.

India is also closely involved with the regional cooperation efforts in Africa. We concluded a cooperation agreement with the Southern African Development Community in October last year. We propose to considerably enhance our mutually beneficial links with other African regional and subregional organizations. India also participates actively in the African Development Bank as a full member.

Cooperation between the private sectors of India and the African countries is growing at a vibrant pace. Several joint ventures in manufacturing sectors have been established by Indian private sector companies in Africa. In certain sectors, such as railways, Indian industry is involved in a major way in the development of African infrastructure.

We have noted the improvements in coordination within the United Nations system of activities for the implementation of the New Agenda. However, the crucial issue of ensuring full ownership through the involvement of all recipient countries, as mentioned by the Secretary-General, deserves the highest priority. As has been observed, for far too long outsiders have looked not for Africa in Africa, but for their own obsessions, enthusiasms, phobias, hopes and interests, and obviously these are what they have found. We need to move away from prescriptive formulations and, instead of advancing alien solutions, respect priority areas identified by the African countries themselves and determine areas of focus and concentration through this interchange. Furthermore, as the Secretary-General pointed out in paragraph 103 of document A/53/390, these initiatives should set clear implementation criteria and mechanisms to ensure that they are free from undue conditionalities. Only then will we be able to reverse the candid and justified assessment of the Secretary-General that the initiatives of the international community have so far had only a limited impact on African development and the New Agenda.

We are convinced that given Africa's resources and limitless potential it has the capacity to emerge as a major global force in the coming century. Given the well-known determination and will of the African countries, what is needed is the willingness of the international community to come forward in true partnership for economic development. We harbour optimistic hope for the future. India would be privileged to be a partner in this great and historic enterprise.

Mr. Suh Dae-won (Republic of Korea): My delegation would like to express its appreciation to the Secretary-General for his report on this agenda item, in which he elaborated the current progress in the implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (UN-NADAF), as well as the obstacles we must overcome.

The economic crisis during the past few months has clearly demonstrated the negative aspects of the globalization process. The crisis has given rise to a broad range of in-depth discussions focused upon the international economic system and on ways to ameliorate it. In the rapid process of globalization, the marginalization of Africa has been accelerated. The resolution of this problem will require a strong partnership between African countries, donors and the United Nations development organizations. No one will gain if Africa is left behind in the process of development. The recent economic crisis has taught us the lesson that the problems of a region certainly have repercussions for the rest of the world.

A comprehensive and holistic approach is required in addressing the critical issues contained in the New Agenda for the Development of Africa. Africa's development activities must be centred on the creation of an enabling environment for capacity-building. Peace and stability are prerequisites for sustainable development. In this regard, my delegation highly appreciates the Secretary-General's report on "The causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa" (A/52/871). We believe that the discussions in the Assembly on this issue a few days ago, under agenda item 164, were substantial and timely. It is with a holistic approach in mind that the Republic of Korea is carrying out its economic and development assistance to Africa and taking part in peacekeeping operations in sub-Saharan Africa.

As the mid-term review of 1996 indicated, the New Agenda for the Development of Africa clearly identifies key priority areas and signals in which direction future development cooperation should be headed. Nevertheless, we are concerned that its implementation is lagging. In particular, mechanisms to monitor and evaluate field-level implementation must be established. Indeed, the successful fulfilment of the New Agenda for the Development of Africa depends upon the efficiency of field-level coordination and the clear identification of implementation criteria. This is why we believe monitoring and evaluation are of crucial value.

My delegation concurs with the recommendation in the Secretary-General's report that the General Assembly must further consider the implementation of the New Agenda before the final review and appraisal. We are of the view that an independent evaluation of the implementation of the Agenda must be carried out with a view to facilitating an in-depth final examination.

Further efforts are required to harmonize various international and bilateral initiatives on African development in order to achieve maximum efficiency and effectiveness. We believe that the New Agenda should be the leading instrument in strengthening compatibility among the currently existing development initiatives. We hope that bilateral donors and development agencies will improve the overall efficiency of their development assistance by focusing on the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative on Africa, the implementing arm of the New Agenda.

With regard to market access, which represents an important element of the New Agenda, my delegation would like to stress the need for further discussion on the substantial implementation of the results of the Geneva high-level meeting on the least developed countries, held in October last year.

In this context, my Government, in cooperation with the Office of the Special Coordinator for Africa and the Least Developed Countries, is planning to host the Forum on Asia-Africa Cooperation in Export Promotion, in Seoul, from 7 to 9 December this year. The purpose of this Forum is to seek ways in which the two regions could maximize mutual benefits of trade, thereby better and more actively preparing ourselves for our futures in the context of the globalization process. This is an integral part of our efforts to explore the potential of South-South cooperation.

The discussions on trade promotion, foreign direct investment and market access are crucial for the African region to overcome marginalization and to actively participate in the global economy. We therefore believe that the Seoul Forum will provide specific contributions for the implementation of the New Agenda for the Development of Africa.

This year the Republic of Korea, despite its current economic difficulties, has been providing $2.3 million to 23 countries in Africa in the form of projects, procurement, development surveys and dispatch of experts. We have also supported the establishment of the United Nations Technology Centre for Africa and Internet facilities for the Economic Commission for Africa, through the contribution of the Korea-Economic Commission for Africa Cooperation Fund, in the belief that information technology will play an important role for the development of Africa in the new millennium.

In closing, we would like to emphasize once again that UN-NADAF is not the concern of African countries alone. The Republic of Korea will remain committed to the expeditious and successful implementation of the New Agenda.

Mr. Shen Guofang (China) (*interpretation from Chinese*): Over the past year, the Asian financial crisis and its impact have been the dominant topic at multilateral economic forums. Given the trend of economic globalization, this is certainly both natural and necessary. However, we should not forget Africa.

Thanks to the untiring efforts of a vast number of African countries, the economic situation in Africa has shown some improvement over the past several years. But the overall economic picture on the continent still looks grim.

The gap between the level of development in Africa and that of the world is still widening. Even if the current growth rate is maintained, it will still take more than 10 years for Africa's per capita gross domestic product to regain its 1980 level.

Poverty is still ubiquitous. In some African countries, people living below the poverty line make up more than 50 per cent of the overall population. Such indicators as the proportion of the population without access to basic health and medical care and the infant mortality rate are much higher in Africa than the world average.

The debt burden remains heavy. The overall volume of external debt for African countries in 1996 amounted to $324 billion, equivalent to 70 per cent of their gross national product for the same year. Their precious resources have to be used for debt servicing instead of being invested in national development.

There is still a severe shortage of development funds. Official development assistance to Africa dropped from $14.2 billion in 1992 to $12.8 billion in 1996. The already limited inflows of private capital are also declining.

Commodity prices on international markets continue to fall. Over the past year, the prices of quite a number of primary products dropped by more than 10 per cent, bringing heavy losses to many African counties.

These facts show that the major goals set in the New Agenda are still far from being reached. The accelerated economic globalization process has not brought African countries their fair share of benefits. To the contrary, its negative impact has proved costly to them. Africa is faced with the clear danger of being marginalized.

Economic globalization means that interdependence among the world's countries has grown to new levels. Sustained and healthy economic development in Africa is an important condition for the continued stability and prosperity of the world economy, and is thus in the long-term interest of the international community as a whole. The international community should dedicate itself to establishing with Africa a partnership for development for the twenty-first century, providing strong support to Africa and helping African countries out of the vicious circle of economic underdevelopment.

African countries have emphasized on numerous occasions that what Africa needs is neither preaching nor new programmes or plans of action. What Africa needs is real action. Concrete steps should be taken to help African countries solve the key problems that are holding back their development efforts. The international community should act in the following ways.

The first is to increase official development assistance to Africa and loosen the conditions placed on such assistance, so that African countries can use the resources more effectively in accordance with the needs and priorities of their own economic and social development. The second is to step up implementation of measures such as the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Debt Initiative, and relieve in real terms the debt burden of African countries. The third is to remove trade barriers targeted at the developing countries, to ensure greater market access for African products. And the final way is to encourage more productive investments and technology transfers, with a view to helping African countries improve their economic structures and enhance their competitiveness in the globalization process.

The United Nations should continue to play a pivotal role in promoting development in Africa and in the effective implementation of the New Agenda. Relevant institutions within the United Nations system should contribute to the development of Africa by devoting sufficient resources to this effort, and by formulating and implementing practical assistance programmes in the light of the specific characteristics of given African countries and of their priorities for national economic development.

An important part of China's foreign policy is to strengthen cooperation with Africa. Such cooperation is beneficial to both sides. Over the decades, we have received the valuable support of the great majority of African countries in many fields. At the same time, we have endeavoured, within our capacity, to help Africa in its economic and social development process. We are delighted to see that, in recent years, the mutually beneficial cooperation between China and African countries has been deepening, with more emphasis on achieving concrete results. The forms taken by our cooperation have also become more diverse. China will continue to support the efforts of African countries towards economic and social development.

We have already achieved concrete results with a number of assistance programmes; we have created employment opportunities for Africa and have provided market access for its exports. Even though China faces economic difficulties of its own, it will continue to support the economic and social development efforts of African countries. We shall moreover make our own contribution to the attainment of the goals set out in the New Agenda.

Mr. Hasmy (Malaysia): I wish to thank the Secretary-General for his progress report on the implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (UN-NADAF) since the mid-term review in 1996. The report, as contained in documents A/53/390 and A/53/390/Add.1, focuses on activities undertaken by the organizations of the United Nations system in the context of UN-NADAF; in our view, it is comprehensive in its coverage, while highlighting some critical issues.

We are heartened to note that there have been some positive signs for the development of Africa, particularly in the economic sphere, to the extent that some have even boldly referred to these changes as reflecting an African renaissance. In a situation where the problems are enormous and almost insurmountable, small steps forward can be a cause for great optimism.

The report indicates that, compared to the early 1990s, twice as many as African countries — some 40 of them — have recorded growth rates of 3 per cent or more. In fact, according to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the average annual growth rate for the continent is currently between 4 per cent and 5 per cent, and per capita incomes are on the rise. Further, the report indicates that foreign direct investment flows have been significant in a number of African countries, increasing by some 6 per cent since 1995. There are other, qualitative, changes which have helped to create a more attractive environment both for capital flows and for official development assistance.

However, despite these upward trends, which are indeed salutary, African development has to be looked at against the backdrop of decades of economic stagnation and decline, which must now be reversed on a sustained basis for Africa to reach a take-off point towards sustained development, bearing in mind that it is estimated that a minimum growth rate of at least 6 per cent per annum is required if Africa is to avoid marginalization.

The new-found optimism on Africa has also to be looked at against a backdrop of some underlying weaknesses in the African economies, such as inadequate savings — averaging 18 per cent as against a minimal desirable rate of 25 per cent — and dependence on a narrow base of export commodities, coupled with a heavy debt burden. From the perspective of Africa being the continent with the highest debt-to-export ratio, the recent positive economic performance would therefore appear to be rather tenuous; it calls for greater efforts from both the African countries themselves and other international partners. In this context, my delegation reiterates its support for the Secretary-General's recommendation in his report on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa (A/52/871) that all remaining official debt of the poorest African countries should be converted into grants by the creditor countries.

As far as implementation of UN-NADAF is concerned, Malaysia welcomes the move last June to make the Secretary-General's System-wide Special Initiative on Africa the implementation arm of UN-NADAF. This would certainly help in terms of giving coherence and enhancing coordination, not just within the United Nations Organization but among the donor community as well. UN-NADAF, as we all know, is an international commitment that was made to support Africa but that had an inherent weakness in that there were no targets or goals. However, the Special Initiative overcame this by focusing on seven major areas. To evaluate the success achieved in these specific areas, targets, goals and performance indicators should be explicitly spelt out. The financial resources that are to be mobilized for each programme should also be indicated. More countries should also be covered under the Special Initiative on Africa programme.

While we recognize the important roles that are being played by the agencies of the United Nations system — including IMF and the World Bank — in realizing the objectives of UN-NADAF, much more remains to be done. In this connection, Malaysia agrees with the conclusion of the Secretary-General's report to the Security Council on Africa, which stated, *inter alia*, that peace and security are inextricably linked to the promotion of development. Clearly, political stability is a critical factor in attracting foreign direct investment and the capital essential for development and growth. This surely will have a direct impact on the implementation of UN-NADAF.

The Assembly has heard many States Members of the Organization call for an end to the current decline in official development assistance. However, such a prospect, or that of an increase in that assistance, seems, under present circumstances, rather unlikely. The official development assistance flows to Africa, as stated in the addendum to the Secretary-General's report, declined from $14.2 billion in 1992 to $12.8 billion in 1996. However, private flows to Africa increased from $3.1 billion in 1992 to $6.8 billion in 1996, with a high of $9.9 billion in 1995. It is worth noting that official development assistance for the whole of Africa in 1992 was less than what a single country in East Asia obtained in the "bailout" during the current financial crisis.

While official development assistance is important, it is Malaysia's belief — as stated by our Prime Minister, Mr. Mahathir Mohamad, at the Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD II) on 19 October 1998 — that the way forward for development of Africa is not through aid, important as it is, but more importantly through foreign direct investment and through the acquisition of skills and technologies. Therefore, it is critical that the organizations of the United Nations system, in their effort to carry forward the aims of UN-NADAF, pay particular attention to actions that would lead to the creation of an enabling environment for foreign direct investment flows, both in terms of infrastructure development and institutional capacity-building. At TICAD II, our Prime Minister also unveiled a trilateral arrangement involving Japan, France and Malaysia to assist African countries in their development.

Malaysia and Africa have, over the last four decades, maintained very cordial and longstanding ties covering a broad spectrum of relations. In recent years there has been a major boost in our relations with Africa, with significant increases in trade and investment as well as in terms of air and sea links. Malaysia-Africa cooperation is today poised to experience forward and positive momentum. We look forward to the emergence of a new Africa as a promising region of growth — an Africa that through an infusion of fresh ideas, capital and technology would be an increasingly important partner in trade and development, particularly in the context of South-South cooperation and in the context of economic globalization.

Mr. Jele (South Africa): My delegation would like to associate itself with the statement made by Indonesia on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

South Africa regards the implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s as one of the key elements in addressing Africa's development challenges in the 1990s. Also crucially important is its appraisal and the follow-up to its implementation after its mid-term review in 1996. To this end, we commend the Secretary-General's report submitted under this item and hope that it will contribute not only to the Agenda's full implementation, but also increase its impact and eventually result in a successful final intergovernmental review in the year 2002.

As proposed in the report, in order to secure an effective and successful follow-up and outcome of the Agenda, we believe that it is crucial for the General Assembly to monitor and evaluate the programme again before its final review.

My delegation is deeply concerned about the economic condition of the continent, particularly its continued lack of economic development in spite of concerted efforts by the international community. For this reason, we have followed very carefully deliberations and efforts to address this problem. We noted with interest the report of the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole on the Mid-term Review of the Implementation of the New Agenda as well as subsequent follow-up processes through various United Nations bodies.

In line with the mid-term review and the deliberations of the Committee for Programme and Coordination and the Administrative Committee on Coordination, it is our view that the importance of the linkages between the New Agenda and the System-wide Special Initiative on Africa should be enhanced to ensure a comprehensive outcome.

These linkages should, of necessity, also take on board concerns and recommendations covered by the Secretary-General in his report to the Security Council and the General Assembly on sources of conflict in Africa, their prevention and the need to lay a firm foundation for durable peace and economic growth after their resolution. This process should also be underpinned by effective follow-up action to evaluate further progress.

Poverty eradication is a prime concern of many Governments in Africa. In line with the review, African Governments continue to develop poverty eradication strategies that are broad-based and cross-cutting. These initiatives straddle areas such as economic reform, the environment and sustainable human resource development. However, such efforts still need to be underpinned by the support of the international community in ensuring that the objectives of the New Agenda are realized.

Since the mid-term review, many African countries have continued to endeavour to place their economies on a sound footing. Such measures also include the maintenance of stringent macroeconomic policies, economic reform, good governance, constitutional government and democratic institutions. As a result, the continent has had modest, though encouraging, economic performance indicators overall. These include positive growth and low inflation rates, as well as a reduction in deficits.

We welcome the submissions made by various organizations of the United Nations system regarding the implementation of aspects of the New Agenda within their respective areas of competence. While mindful of the challenges and limitations under which most of such efforts are made, we note that there is still much scope for improvement.

Our deep concern, however, is with the problems encountered as a result of the external environment, problems that very often frustrate and undermine constructive efforts in the implementation of the New Agenda. A particular constraint in this context is the negative impact of globalization on the fragile economies of Africa and the progressively declining financial resource flows to the continent.

Despite the opportunities offered by globalization and liberalization, the phenomenon often negatively affects the extent to which most developing countries with liberalized economic systems are able to exercise independence in policy formulation and execution. We therefore regard the Secretary-General's report and its addendum on this item as useful tools in stimulating discussion in order to find a lasting solution.

The New Agenda seeks to lay a strong foundation for Africa's economic development, and for industrialization in particular. Africa's concerted efforts at attaining this goal continue in various forms and on various fronts. However, globalization has not helped this process much. In particular, it has not fostered an enabling climate for Africa's internal economic industrial integration, which is a crucial starting point for the attainment of this goal. Given the dynamics of the international economic system, African economies are under constant pressure to liberalize. The downside is that, do that as they may, they continue to be marginalized and remain vulnerable to increased competition from more established and advanced economies.

To mitigate these problems it is vital that the objectives of the New Agenda should receive universal support in order to underpin Africa's own efforts to achieve regional economic integration, as such integration would go a long way towards building and strengthening the continent's capacity to compete.

There is an overriding need for improved coordination and feedback between the processes at the global and the operational field levels. Countries also need to be closely involved in all aspects of their country programmes. This would also help in strengthening regular reporting on progress and simplify evaluation mechanisms. In this regard, we find the report constructive in identifying flaws in the New Agenda's reporting and feedback process and hope that concerted efforts to find a solution will continue to be made.

The need to mobilize and provide adequate resources is central to ensuring delivery of the objectives of the New Agenda. The mobilization of domestic resources also needs to be supplemented by the generous injection of resource flows from outside the continent.

For far too long developing countries have argued for the provision of adequate resources in order to make the critical break that is so crucial for Africa's sustained growth and sustainable development. We wish to reiterate the observation made in the report that, in order to achieve the development of Africa, the continent actually needs higher resource flows than originally estimated in the Secretary-General's report for the 1990s. This, in our view, would go some way towards securing a positive outcome for the implementation of the New Agenda.

We particularly welcome the updated version of this report, entitled "Mobilization of additional resources for African development: a study on overall resource flows to Africa", which has now been issued as an addendum to the main report, and we commend it to our developing partners in particular and to development agencies in general.

Mr. Kamal (Pakistan): We would like to convey our appreciation to the Secretary-General for presenting an analytical report, in document A/53/390 and Add.1, on the agenda item under consideration.

We would like to associate ourselves with the statement made by the representative of Indonesia, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

Africa is facing formidable challenges. To address these challenges, many initiatives have been launched by the United Nations, by bilateral donors and by the continent itself. The United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s is an umbrella initiative that covers a range of priorities critical to the development of Africa. The progress on the implementation of the New Agenda has been very well documented in the Secretary-General's report. To say the least, however, the achievements have been outnumbered by the unrealized objectives.

Africa's heavy debt burden has increased by 2.1 per cent compared to 1995, making Africa the continent with the highest debt-to-export ratio. There has been a drop in the manufacturing sector, and Africa's share of the global market has remained low, accounting for only 2 per cent of world trade. Most of the increase in private capital flows to the developing countries has bypassed the African countries, which received only $6.8 billion in 1996 — that is, about 2.7 per cent of the total flows to the developing countries.

While efforts are under way to intensify the implementation of the New Agenda, the Secretary-General, we believe, has provided us with a comprehensive agenda in his report entitled "The causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa" (A/52/871). He has addressed both of the principal concerns of Africa, which are peace and development. They are deeply intertwined.

We will, however, address only the development dimension at this meeting.

To reverse Africa's marginalization in the globalizing world economy, our initiatives should be followed by concrete actions for the development of Africa. Here we would like to endorse the Secretary-General's comment that it is in deeds rather than in declarations that the international community's commitment to Africa will be measured.

While we agree with most of the recommendations made by the Secretary-General in his comprehensive agenda, as well as regarding the implementation of the New Agenda, we would like to focus on the following priority areas.

First, we should endeavour to find a decisive solution to the unsustainable debt burden of Africa. The conversion of all the remaining official debt of the poorest African countries into grants deserves serious consideration. We fully support the Organization of African Unity's proposal for an international agreement to clear the entire debt stock of the poorest countries in Africa within a reasonably short period of time. This would release a considerable amount of resources which could be spent on human resource development.

A second area of priority should be enhanced and guaranteed access to the developed countries' markets, as well as improved regional cooperation. Trade facilitation and market access on a preferential basis would enable the African countries to embark on the path of export-led growth. The Organization of African Unity's institutional capacity to establish an African economic community must be further enhanced. Such a community would help in promoting regional and subregional integration, which would then promote economic discipline and sound macroeconomic policies.

Thirdly, Africa's overall industrial performance should be improved. An acceleration in the transformation from raw material producers to processors will have to be achieved in order to broaden and deepen Africa's manufacturing base. Africa should be provided with the requisite technologies and resources to undertake such a transformation.

Fourthly, increased investment in human resources will have to be made. We believe that human resource development holds a key to overcoming the challenges being faced by Africa. Despite our own financial constraints, Pakistan launched an Africa Programme 10 years ago. The Programme is primarily focused on capacity-building and human resource development. But to give impetus to such efforts, major investments in education, health, population and basic social programmes are required. A special fund for human resource development in Africa may be established.

Fifthly, effective mobilization of financial resources has to be addressed in a serious manner. The decline in official development assistance is inconsistent with the initiatives and policy pronouncements on Africa. Private capital flows are unlikely to meet the financial requirements of the African countries in the social sector and in infrastructure-building.

Africa would require $50 to $60 billion a year even to effectively reduce the problem of poverty. The goals of the New Agenda or the "Comprehensive Agenda" cannot be achieved unless we ensure sufficient resource flows to Africa. The recent recovery in Africa is very fragile and could unravel if not sustained with higher resource flows. The international community cannot, therefore, be complacent about the needs of Africa.

We believe that in order to achieve the best results we should have clearly defined goals and a clearly defined time-frame to ensure the implementation of the various initiatives launched by the international community.

We hope that the next review of the New Agenda, to be held in the year 2002, will present a much better picture than we have today regarding the state of "development" in Africa. Despite our preoccupation with the current financial turmoil, we have to ensure that Africa is not left out of the process of globalization. As in South-East Asia, events in Africa could well become determinants in the continuing health or otherwise of the world economy and of global society.

Mr. Sergiwa (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) (*interpretation from Arabic*): At the outset, my delegation would like to associate itself with the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Group of 77. We support the content of that statement. We also support the statement to be made by the delegate of Nigeria on behalf of the Group of African States.

The United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s, adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution 46/151 of

18 December 1991, genuinely expresses the interests of the international community in the African continent. It also reflects its solidarity with it in facing today's difficult economic situation and in finding the appropriate solutions. Indeed, we appreciate the efforts made by the Secretary-General in the implementation of the recommendations agreed upon at the Agenda's mid-term review, as reflected in his progress report in document A/53/390 and Add.1.

The report makes it clear that the United Nations system has achieved a great deal in implementing the New Agenda. However, it focuses attention on the continuing dangerous economic situation in Africa. As a matter of fact, the continent continues to face economic, trade and development difficulties. As a result, it contains the largest number of the world's least developed countries, countries with the least income and the heaviest debt burden in the world.

Compared to the world population, the African peoples are the most exposed to the dangers of poverty, natural disasters, armed conflicts and starvation, and they face a deteriorating health and educational situation. All of this occurs despite Africa's great potential in terms of human and natural resources and a huge potential which would allow it to increasingly participate in the growth of the international economy and international trade if this potential were used effectively and away from hegemony, away from continuous depletion of its resources.

This situation in Africa has taken different forms, the worst of which is the deteriorating state of external debts, which reached $323 billion in 1996. This represents 70 per cent of its gross national product this year. It is also reflected in the continuing decline of export primary-commodity prices and in the restrictions placed on the entry of Africa's exports to international markets. This has led to the marginalization of Africa's role in international trade, with its share not exceeding 2 per cent. Furthermore, it has led to the reduction of official development assistance and to the developed countries' failure to attain the internationally agreed target of 0.7 per cent or to provide additional resources for development in Africa. This is not to mention the negative effects of globalization, which serves the interests of the most powerful countries in the world and threatens the economies of African countries through hegemony from outside over Africa's raw materials and the transformation of its industries and institutions into dependencies.

As indicated in the Secretary-General's report on the causes of conflict in Africa, we all know that the colonial situation faced by African countries for a long time contributed to Africa's political instability and economic backwardness. Its human and natural resources have been depleted. Its markets have been monopolized in the worst possible way.

The countries that colonized Africa and brought it great trouble must help it by rectifying the mistakes of the past. They must cancel its debts immediately; they must provide Africa with financial resources and technical help in order to implement the New Agenda, which is a source of great hope for the improvement of the social and economic situation in the continent.

This support should not be seen as a substitute for the efforts of the African States themselves. The main responsibility in this situation lies with Africa. Indeed, African countries have adopted many initiatives and had tangible success. This support, rather, should be an expression of solidarity with the continent on the basis of shared responsibility, enhanced partnership and the renunciation of the policy of neglect and marginalization to which Africa has been and continues to be subject. We hold the position that this is Africa's right, in view of its legacy of colonization, plunder, deprivation, enforced backwardness, marginalization, suffering and exploitation.

Despite the efforts of African States to overcome their development problems, domestic conflicts and civil wars are increasing and the economic situation is worsening. The same holds true for the problems of refugees and displaced persons. The profits of development in Africa are spent on servicing its debts, which have been sapping its energies and reversing the flow of resources. If the developed countries have the sincere desire and political will to help Africa's development, they must seek to implement the internationally agreed targets for official development assistance. They must settle the question of Africa's external debts and refrain from any action that hinders the efforts of its States, such as the imposition of coercive economic measures on certain African countries by certain developed countries. In this respect, I refer to the measures imposed on my country, Sudan and Nigeria by the United States of America, which have obstructed the implementation of our development plans and aggravated the economic situation.

The United Nations mechanisms, development programmes and specialized agencies must all mobilize the necessary financial resources for Africa's development. They must accelerate economic cooperation and integration at the regional and subregional levels, taking into account that cooperation among the countries of the South is one of the central pillars of the development process in Africa and of Africa's self-reliance.

The international financial institutions, such as the Bretton Woods institutions, must not impose new, unfair conditionalities on credits and assistance to Africa for political considerations imposed by certain States to serve their own political interests. Such conditionalities would deprive some African States of the financial resources they need to develop and to implement the objectives of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa, in the 1990s.

In conclusion, I wish to confirm that my country will pursue its efforts to meet its obligations vis-à-vis African development on the basis of our fundamental policies towards the continent and of our conviction that, if the critical economic situation in Africa is allowed to persist, it will destabilize international peace and security.

Mr. Mahbubani (Singapore): We live in bewildering times. Economic experts all around the globe are puzzled. Most have been surprised by the developments of the past 18 months. Clearly, we now have a very dynamic global economy, which is being rocked by new waves with increasing frequency. To do well, our economies must learn to surf these new waves. Past performance is no guarantee of future success or future failure. The East Asian economies, for example, surfed well in the 1980s and early 1990s, but have fallen off their surfboards in the past 18 months. The need to learn from one another is even greater today. Each new wave, even as it presents dangers, also presents opportunities for us to surf better.

In this regard, it is encouraging that the progress report by the Secretary-General on the implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (UN-NADAF) presents some positive news. The report notes:

> "Since the mid-term review, African countries have deepened the progress that had previously been achieved in several fields, which has led some to speak of an 'African renaissance'. Indeed, compared to the early 1990s twice as many countries (40) recorded growth rates of 3 per cent or more. According to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the average annual growth rate for the continent is 4-5 per cent, and per capita incomes are on the rise. Moreover, inflation has dramatically come down, from 36 per cent in 1994 to 10 per cent in 1997. Fiscal deficits have been reduced by half in the past five years, and external current account deficits are down to 2.5 per cent of GDP. The flows of foreign direct investment (FDI), which have increased by 6 per cent since 1995, have been significant in a number of African countries." (*A/53/390, para. 11*)

The report, of course, qualifies this positive assessment with a documentation of continuing weaknesses and obstacles to growth, but on balance it gives ground for optimism. We commend the United Nations Secretariat for this excellent report, as well as for the addendum on mobilization of additional resources.

Singapore has taken a consistent interest in the economic growth and development of Africa. During my first posting as Singapore's Permanent Representative to the United Nations from 1984 to 1989, I felt privileged to be called upon to chair the informal consultations on the resolution on the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development (UNPAAERD). The following year, Singapore was elected one of the three Vice-Chairmen for the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole on the Mid-term Review of UN-NADAF.

However, even as we try to help, we are consistently aware that the experience of a small city-State with no natural resources may not necessarily be relevant to a continent which is so richly endowed. Nevertheless, we have always opened our doors to all who wish to learn from our experience and have been pleased to welcome 27 African leaders, as well as several ministerial delegations, in the past decade.

These high-level visits complement the efforts we have undertaken to share our experience under the Singapore Cooperation Programme (SCP). Since the launch of the SCP, over 1,100 officials from sub-Saharan African countries have attended courses in Singapore on a variety of subjects. We also participated in the recent second Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD II) that was held from 19 to 21 October 1998.

Given our small size and limited resources, Singapore is aware that, if we work on our own, awareness of Singapore's technical assistance programmes will not spread very far. We do not have the international networks to spread the word about the courses available in Singapore. So, to generate better awareness as well as to enhance the quality of programmes in Singapore, we have established partnerships in technical assistance with other countries and international organizations. We call such partnerships "third country training programmes" and we have signed them with 11 other countries and eight international organizations. Singapore was one of the first countries to contribute to the Commonwealth Africa Investment Fund, which was launched by President Nelson Mandela in July 1996. Our High Commissioner in London, Mr J. Y. Pillay, is the Chairman of the Investment Fund.

Singapore also works jointly with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to extend technical assistance under the Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries (TCDC) programme and the joint training programme for sub-Saharan African countries. The Singapore-UNDP joint training programme for sub-Saharan African countries will be conducting a course on export market development for a few countries. In addition, Singapore has established two- to three-year technical assistance rolling plans, catering to the specific training needs of South Africa, Botswana, Namibia and Zimbabwe.

To date, Singapore has been able to work with only 27 African countries. While we have as yet been unable to reach all 53, we would like to do more to include other African countries in our technical cooperation programmes in the near future. Singapore is exploring new ways and means of extending the reach of our technical assistance. For example, we have worked with Botswana in the area of productivity by helping establish the Botswana National Productivity Centre in 1995. Botswana Work Improvement Team facilitators were trained in Singapore in three batches over three years. Singapore hopes that the Centre will not only serve Botswana, but also become a premier training ground for productivity-related courses for the whole of southern Africa.

The private sector has also launched assistance programmes for African countries. In 1996, an African scholarship scheme was announced in Nairobi, Kenya, with the sponsorship of the Singapore International Foundation and the Standard Chartered Bank. We have also produced some publications on our technical assistance programme.

Allow me, in conclusion, to re-emphasize a point I made in my introduction. In the bewildering economic environment we live in, the need to learn from each other has become greater. That is why Singapore is continuing to learn from other countries even as it shares its experience with other countries. We have also found some conclusions in the Secretary-General's report on the New Agenda that we believe are relevant and applicable not just to Africa but to all developing countries. For example, the report highlights the greater need for regional economic integration, achieving good governance, strengthening the financial sector and reinforcing and accelerating economic liberalization. We believe that this advice is equally valid for all developing countries in the new economic environment that we live in.

Today, none of us can be absolutely certain which is the right road to take for economic development. The best way we can help each other is to share our experiences. In November 1995, when six African leaders visited Singapore en route to the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Auckland, the Prime Minister of Singapore, Mr. Goh Chok Tong said:

> "Singapore learnt a great deal from other countries in the early years of our development. If we have done well, it is due in no small part to the help that we received from other countries. Not only did we learn real skills, but we also avoided their mistakes. We did not try to reinvent the wheel. If you think our experience is relevant, we are happy to share it with you."

Mr. Insanally (Guyana): I have the honour to speak, on behalf of the 14 States members of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) that are States Members of the United Nations, on agenda item 24, on the implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (UN-NADAF), including measures and recommendations agreed upon at its mid-term review. I do so in full support of the statement made earlier by the representative of Indonesia, which holds the chairmanship of the Group of 77 and China.

CARICOM Governments have long been pledged to solidarity with and support for Africa's economic and social progress, and the development of its peoples. Coming as we do from a similar colonial past, and linked by strong historical ties, the peoples of our region share many of the problems of their African partners, as well as their hopes and aspirations for a better life. Joined in a common struggle for political freedom and independence, we are now united in our struggle for economic independence, the eradication of poverty and a prosperous future for our countries on both sides of the Atlantic.

As we consider today the implementation of UN-NADAF we are greatly assisted by the Secretary-General's report and its addendum, which provide a thoughtful overview of the progress made and of the problems being encountered in the process. While reflecting a measure of optimism about Africa's growth prospects, the report makes it clear that there is no room for complacency. Importantly, it highlights a number of areas of continuing concern, which require urgent attention both by the African States themselves and by the international community.

CARICOM countries welcome the advances made in the strengthening of democracy and good government on the continent. We also note with satisfaction that the period of negative growth in per capita gross national product in the 1980s and early 1990s has been succeeded in recent years by consistently positive growth in the region as a whole and in several individual African countries. However, it remains a matter of deep concern for us that growth rates, despite averaging nearly 4 per cent over the period 1995 to 1997, fall far short of the levels required to reduce poverty, and in some cases they mask differences among individual countries. Furthermore, as the Secretary-General notes in his report, even the present rates of growth cannot be sustained at current levels of investment. As a result, there is an urgent need for the mobilization of additional resources if the 6 per cent growth rate targeted under the New Agenda is to be realized.

Regrettably, current trends in resource flows to Africa are hardly encouraging. While global official development assistance levels continue on a relentless decline, having reached a low of 0.22 per cent in 1997, the continent's share of official development assistance has shrunk, presenting a very worrying prognosis for future international support. At the same time, despite progress in macroeconomic reform and liberalization of the external sector in many countries, Africa as a whole has managed to attract only very paltry sums of private capital, and these we see, are concentrated in no more than a handful of countries. These trends are exacerbated by an onerous debt burden, the servicing of which represents a considerable strain and drain on scarce development resources.

It is clear, therefore, that while some progress has been made to improve the African condition since the adoption of the New Agenda, the vicious cycle of underdevelopment in Africa has not been broken. Although the continent represents almost 22 per cent of the world's population, today it accounts for only slightly more than 2 per cent of world trade, a statistic which reveals a poor level of investment in development. Moreover, with extremely low gross national product, more than half of Africa's population lives in conditions of dismal poverty with little hope of real improvement. The signals of economic recovery, though positive, remain weak and could disappear if not strengthened immediately by international support.

Accordingly, we agree with the Secretary-General that the international community must do more for Africa. Failure to honour commitments already made could jeopardize the gains that have so far been achieved. As the Secretary-General rightly noted in paragraph 106 of his report in document A/52/871,

> "Concrete action must be taken, as it is in deeds rather than in declarations that the international community's commitment to Africa will be measured."

In addition, as we have suggested, new commitments may be needed to ensure that Africa's development is placed on a truly sustainable path.

In this context, CARICOM urges an increase in international support for Africa. We fully endorse the Secretary-General's call on Development Assistance Committee countries in general, and the G-7 countries in particular, to halt the decline in their official development assistance as a proportion of gross national product and to restore their official development assistance levels to previous historically high ratios within a mutually agreed but necessarily time-bound period. We also generally support the Secretary-General's recommendations for debt reduction and the increase of private flows to Africa. In this context, we welcome and encourage the process launched by the Government of Japan at the Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD) and the initiative taken by the Government of the United States in support of Africa.

For our part, the CARICOM countries have taken several steps to further our cooperation with Africa. Last September, the Ministers for Foreign Affairs and representatives of CARICOM and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and their secretariats held discussions in Durban, South Africa, with a view to formalizing relations between the two regional groupings. They defined the following areas of cooperation between the two regions: forging a strategic alliance between

CARICOM and SADC to promote trade; technical cooperation on rules of origin and a common external tariff; the pursuit of post-Lomé IV negotiations; the exchange of technical expertise between the two secretariats; and the involvement of the private sectors of CARICOM and SADC to explore trade and investment opportunities, including air transport and tourism. CARICOM also intends to strengthen its links with the Organization of African Unity and other regional and subregional organizations on the continent. In the spirit of South-South cooperation, we intend to work together for the benefit of our peoples.

In conclusion, I wish to reiterate CARICOM's view that international support for Africa's development should respond to Africa's own priorities and be based on African ownership of the process. Consequently, we feel that in the continuing international efforts to implement UN-NADAF, full account must be taken of Africa's views on what further needs to be done. Only in this way can we be sure that our initiatives and actions will result in sound and stable development for Africa.

Mr. Ndjemba Endezoumou (Cameroon) (*interpretation from French*): It is an honour and a privilege for me to address the Assembly in place of Mr. Martin Belinga-Eboutou, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Cameroon to the United Nations, who is at present in Yaoundé at the tenth ministerial meeting of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa. I have therefore been entrusted with expressing the views of the delegation of Cameroon on this agenda item.

The report before us, in which the Secretary-General requests new guidelines from Member States in preparation for the review and final appraisal in 2002, takes stock of progress made in the implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s. To this end, the first part of the document takes note of actions in the respective areas of competence of bodies of the United Nations system in connection with the recommendations resulting from the mid-term review of the implementation of the New Agenda.

It is clear that considerable efforts, which are described in detail, have been carried out in priority areas: acceleration of economic reform, considered by some an inevitable stage in the African renaissance, despite certain shortcomings; promotion of the private sector and of foreign direct investment, with privatization as the means for mobilizing resources; intensification of the democratization process and the strengthening of civil society, through which the African Charter for Popular Participation in Development and Transformation will find its full expression; and the implementation of the concept of good governance.

Other priority areas have also received special attention in the report, such as the stock-taking of the various initiatives and measures for relief undertaken by the developed countries and the urging by the Security Council that creditor countries and the Bretton Woods institutions act to reduce the African debt burden.

Other areas include the facilitation of commercial trade and the opening up of markets, cooperation, regional and subregional integration, the environment and development, diversification of the African economies, agriculture, rural development, food security and all the different human facets.

The various efforts thus noted and the results achieved have been made possible by the sacrifices made by the Governments and the peoples of Africa themselves, with the decisive bilateral and multilateral support of friendly countries and international institutions. My delegation would like to take this opportunity to express once again my Government's deep gratitude to all of these partners. Cameroon and its people are particularly appreciative and mindful of the valuable and valued contribution all of these partners are making to our recovery efforts. Cameroon is sure that it can continue to count on them in the vigorous and composed pursuit of its programme of far-reaching economic and social change.

The second part of the report of the Secretary-General is, on the other hand, a kind of urgent appeal addressed to Member States regarding the major challenges that the United Nations New Agenda must still meet if we wish it to fully achieve its goals.

These challenges include, first, the economic and industrial integration of Africa into globalizaton. Until now, the report states, the globalization of the economy has been accompanied by a notable marginalization of the continent. That tendency is in fact likely to become more pronounced, for it is clear that the benefits Africa derives from world trade will decline by $1.2 billion annually at a time when other parts of the world can expect an estimated $30 billion to $40 billion in benefits in the year 2002. Moreover, Africa's trade represents a mere 2 per cent of world trade. The solution would seem to lie in an expansion of production in the African countries, in a spirit of complementarity, in order to promote economies of scale.

Secondly, there is the challenge of streamlining coordination and complementarity between the global political process and operational activities in the field.

My delegation supports the rationalization effort undertaken by the Committee for Programme and Coordination concerning the conceptual framework for United Nations action to be taken in view of the proliferation of initiatives within our Organization and for better follow-up in the field. Moreover, it shares the idea of the establishment — as has been done in connection with the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, the Beijing Conference on Women and the Copenhagen World Summit for Social Development — of an intergovernmental assessment mechanism, to meet at regular intervals.

The third challenge includes the mobilization of financial resources. Here the weakness of domestic savings in African States is compounded by a drastic decline in international capital flows towards Africa. Financial assistance for the continent, be it in the form of official development assistance or private investment, has today, unfortunately, fallen victim to erratic capital flows, which in real time move towards more profitable financial sites or towards stronger markets. In fact, if nothing is done to check this trend, another crisis will be looming on the horizon for the African economies.

My delegation fully supports the report's proposals regarding the last two challenges, namely, the establishment of mechanisms for follow-up, control and assessment within the Secretariat of the United Nations, along with the possibility of an independent assessment, and the need for harmonization of the international and bilateral initiatives under way.

Africa, once again, and certainly not for the last time, is the focus of the work of our Organization. Consideration of agenda item 24 after the high-level meeting and the meeting devoted to the causes of conflict in Africa attests to the interest of Member States in that continent. My delegation deeply appreciates this readiness to assist in the search for solutions to the various problems facing Africa. In that connection, we reaffirm our support for the various approaches set out in the report of the Secretary-General on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa.

Let me recall a number of facts. All statistics are in agreement that the population of Africa is approximately 80 per cent rural; that the African economy is primarily based on agriculture; that women constitute more than half of the population of each African State; that young people constitute nearly two thirds of the population; that poor infrastructure, particularly in the area of transportation, is a serious impediment to African development; and that, all else being equal, the thing most commonly shared by the majority of African States is poverty. Thus, any plan for solving the problems of the continent must integrate the human dimension both as a starting point and as an objective.

To be sure, structural reforms are helping to improve the socio-economic environment. But theirs are short-term goals that in many cases involve only institutional economic actors; they address concepts whose benefits and merits the vast majority of African women and young people and rural and even urban populations want to see reflected in their daily lives. The improvement of the quality of life of these social groups thus appears in all respects to be a decisive factor and a potential catalyst for the development process in Africa.

In the view of my delegation, intensive action is needed; this means that African human beings, with all their dimensions and all their problems, must be the focus and the driving force for development, and must not be considered in passing or as a mere tactical factor.

It was with that conviction in mind that the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs of Cameroon, addressing the Assembly on 30 September 1998, recalled the commitment of President Paul Biya to making the fight against poverty the highest priority of his first seven-year term of office.

Because of its unfortunate situation, Africa provides vast opportunities for joining together in combat. In that context, the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s would gain by encouraging interactive dialogue among the various stakeholders — more diverse today than in the past — so that we can together find the right responses to African problems.

Ms. Montoya (United States of America): I have the honour to address the General Assembly on the implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (UN-NADAF). The nations of Africa and the international community face many challenges. None is more important than working together for sustainable development so that poverty can be reduced and a sense of hope restored. In this regard, the United States endorses the report and recommendations of the Secretary-General on the mid-term review of the New Agenda. We welcome in particular the news of increased economic growth, reduced inflation and the rise in per capita incomes on the continent as a whole, despite the conflicts taking place in some countries. We also welcome the linkages being established between the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative on Africa and UN-NADAF, as well as the outcome of the second Tokyo International Conference on African Development. This is an integrated effort, a reflection of a more focused, more effective United Nations.

More must be done. Although some African nations have made substantial progress in economic recovery, these gains are threatened by the international financial crisis as well as by weather disruptions. As the Secretary-General's progress report highlighted, more work needs to be accomplished on the promotion of private sector and foreign direct investment, democratization, strengthening of civil society and debt relief. The debt burden of many African countries and the drag it creates on development have been amplified by the overall slowdown in global economic activity. We agree with the Secretary-General's assessment that this is an area that clearly needs to be addressed with the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund.

We would like also to note the emphasis placed by the Secretary-General on the concepts of ownership and global partnership in this effort. As President Clinton stated here just one month ago, globalization of the world's economy is a reality; it brings challenges as well as opportunities. We are all interlinked through trade, commerce, travel and communications. The actions of one country have repercussions on others.

National ownership and global partnership are the keys to UN-NADAF and the Special Initiative on Africa. The mid-term review of UN-NADAF indicated that Africa has begun to take important steps to address problems of sustainable development, environmental degradation, the advancement of women, health and infrastructure through the many United Nations agency services and regional conferences available. This consensus on development policy takes into account a globalized economy. The New Agenda for the Development of Africa provides the policy framework required to accomplish our mission, while the Special Initiative develops that framework and places it in an operational context.

It is important to build development programmes upon the priorities for national development set at the country and regional levels, as well as in keeping with the international community's consensus agreement on how United Nations resources should be directed. Coordination among national officials, Africa's own development experts, specialists in the development community and the United Nations at the field level is essential to develop pragmatic, reality-based initiatives. In many strife-afflicted countries, a key challenge is to convert emergency assistance into sustainable development programmes.

Africa faces daunting problems. Many countries continue to suffer from civil strife, high population growth rates, a lack of transparency, unsustainable debt burdens and minimal investment, both foreign and domestic. Our response, in our own bilateral and multilateral development efforts, is to work more often with the stakeholders and increase the focus on African ownership of the development process. The United States will continue to support empowerment in our bilateral and multilateral development assistance programme.

Good governance, accountability, transparency, restraint, the rule of law and an active civil society are elements of a successful strategy. International support for capacity-building is a component which the United Nations can provide. Dialogue among all stakeholders, including non-governmental organizations, is also a key to progress. This year's triennial policy review of United Nations operational activities for development is an opportunity to improve the delivery of United Nations technical assistance and to focus resources on the least developed countries, many of which are in Africa.

The United States believes we are seeing important, promising signs that the international community is aware of the changing tide in Africa. We are grateful for this opportunity to express our support for the progress that has been made and to highlight the challenges ahead.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.

United Nations A/53/PV.46

General Assembly

Fifty-third Session

Official Records

46th plenary meeting
Wednesday, 28 October 1998, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Opertti . . . . (Uruguay)

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Agenda item 8 (*continued*)

Adoption of the agenda and organization of work: reports of the General Committee

Second report of the General Committee (A/53/250/Add.1)

The President (*interpretation from Spanish*): The Second report of the General Committee of the General Assembly, document A/53/250/Add.1, concerns a request by the Democratic Republic of the Congo for the inclusion in the agenda of an additional item entitled "Armed aggression against the Democratic Republic of the Congo", as well as a request by the Islamic Republic of Iran for the inclusion of an additional item entitled "Dialogue among civilizations".

In paragraph 1 of the report, the General Committee recommends that the General Assembly include in the agenda of the current session the item entitled "Armed aggression against the Democratic Republic of the Congo".

May I take it that the General Assembly decides to include this additional item in the agenda of the current session?

It was so decided.

The President (*interpretation from Spanish*): In paragraph 2 of the report, the General Committee recommends that the General Assembly include in the agenda of the current session the item entitled "Dialogue among civilizations".

May I take it that the General Assembly decides to include this additional item in the agenda of the current session?

It was so decided.

The President (*interpretation from Spanish*): The General Committee further decided to recommend to the General Assembly that this additional item be considered directly in plenary meeting.

May I take it that the General Assembly decides to consider this item directly in plenary meeting?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 28

Cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union

Report of the Secretary-General (A/53/458)

Draft resolution (A/53/L.12)

The President (*interpretation from Spanish*): I call on the representative of Spain to introduce draft resolution A/53/L.12.

This record contains the original text of speeches delivered in English and interpretations of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to original speeches only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned, *within one month of the date of the meeting*, to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, Room C-178. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

Mr. Arias (Spain) (*interpretation from Spanish*): On behalf of the delegation of Spain, and on my own behalf, I wish to place on record our particular pleasure at addressing the plenary of the General Assembly under agenda item 28 in order to introduce the draft resolution contained in document A/53/L.12, concerning cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union.

The original text of the draft resolution was prepared jointly by the delegations of the States members of the Executive Committee of the Inter-Parliamentary Union.

The Secretary-General, in his report to the General Assembly submitted on 5 October 1998, indicates that cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union has intensified throughout the past year, with the two organizations conducting a number of joint activities, thus strengthening each other. Mr. Kofi Annan gives a detailed account of these activities, which unquestionably represent a significant contribution on the part of the Inter-Parliamentary Union at a time — as indicated in resolution 52/7 — at which the United Nations is preparing itself to tackle the challenges of the twenty-first century.

This cooperation offered by the Inter-Parliamentary Union extends to the organizations of the United Nations system, such as the International Labour Organization (ILO), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

Furthermore, I wish also to mention that the opening in March 1998 of the Inter-Parliamentary Union Liaison Office with the United Nations in New York has facilitated and greatly contributed to the strengthening of its cooperation with our Organization.

In this respect, I take this opportunity to convey my warm thanks to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Kofi Annan, and to the Secretary-General of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, Mr. Anders Johnsson, as well as to the staff of the secretariats of the two organizations, for their valuable assistance in support of the cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union.

The positive picture that I have briefly outlined shows the potential of cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union, which also enjoys broad support among the States Members of our Organization. Indeed, as will be clearly seen, the draft resolution contained in document A/53/L.12 is sponsored by 94 States Members. In addition to those States, the following have become sponsors: Angola, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, China, Cuba, El Salvador, Indonesia, Kenya, Malaysia, Mauritania, Nepal, New Zealand, Norway, Pakistan, Singapore, Thailand, Tunisia, Vanuatu, Viet Nam and Zambia, for a total of 114 sponsors.

In its preambular part, the draft resolution, having recalled resolution 52/7, takes note with appreciation of the resolutions adopted and activities carried out by the Inter-Parliamentary Union during the past year in support of United Nations actions in the fields of peace and security, economic and social development, international law and human rights, democracy, gender issues and governance. Furthermore, in its operative part, it welcomes the initiative of the Inter-Parliamentary Union of holding a conference of presiding officers of national parliaments at United Nations Headquarters, in conjunction with the Millennium Assembly in 2000 proposed by the Secretary-General.

In this regard, I would recall that the Inter-Parliamentary Council, at its Conference at Windhoek, Namibia, in April this year, endorsed the proposal for such a conference. Subsequently, in September, the Council, at a meeting held in Moscow, took note of the United Nations Secretary-General's support for that conference and set as its objectives, first, that its participants should enjoy the opportunity to express their views on ways in which national parliaments and the Inter-Parliamentary Union can work with the United Nations in the new millennium; and secondly, that it should offer an opportunity to adopt a solemn act rededicating the Inter-Parliamentary Union. At that Moscow Conference, it was also agreed to establish a preparatory committee for the conference.

Furthermore, in operative paragraph 3, the Secretary-General is requested to submit a report to the General Assembly at its fifty-fourth session on various aspects of cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union, including information made available by the Inter-Parliamentary Union on preparations for the proposed conference. Lastly, in operative paragraph 4, it is decided to include in the provisional agenda of its fifty-fourth session the item entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union".

In conclusion, and given that the draft resolution I have just introduced has no financial implications for the programme budget, I wish to propose, on behalf of all 114 sponsors, that it be adopted by consensus.

Mr. Kier (Austria): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The Central and Eastern European countries associated with the European Union — Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia — and the associated country Cyprus, as well as the European Free Trade Association country member of the European Economic Area, Iceland, align themselves with my statement.

It is with great pleasure that I address the General Assembly on the item before us, "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union". May I also mention that today, for the first time, all 15 member States of the European Union will sponsor this draft resolution. The European Union is confident that the General Assembly will adopt the draft resolution by consensus.

The draft resolution before us, which was introduced by the Permanent Representative of Spain, Ambassador Arias, strongly supports the further strengthening of the cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), especially in the fields of peace and security, economic and social development, international law and human rights, democracy, gender issues and governance.

The European Union welcomes these developments, as parliaments are called on to play an ever-increasing role in international cooperation. The Inter-Parliamentary Union is an ideal forum to connect both. The national parliaments representing their respective peoples have, *inter alia*, the responsibility of providing the necessary political and moral support for the manifold United Nations activities, as well as the funds for our world Organization, and are not least, therefore, in following its work with keen interest. For their part, the United Nations and, in particular, the General Assembly, while clearly intergovernmental, have to live up to the expectations of we, the peoples of the United Nations.

The task of facilitator taken by the Inter-Parliamentary Union, therefore, cannot be underestimated. It is the link between national parliaments and the General Assembly and thus contributes to making this natural partnership between the two, their mutual exchange of views and of information, even more valuable and effective. Therefore, the European Union strongly supports the efforts taken in a common attempt by the General Assembly and the Secretary-General to allow parliaments and civil society to play a greater role in the United Nations system.

I will briefly refer to the results achieved at both IPU Conferences held this year, which are, of course, of global relevance and therefore important for this General Assembly. At the Conference in Windhoek last April, the Inter-Parliamentary Union adopted numerous resolutions of topical interest, among which, to mention just a few, were resolutions on foreign debt as a factor limiting the integration of the third world countries into the process of globalization and on the situation in Kosovo and measures to ensure a lasting and peaceful solution to the crisis.

Of particular relevance in view of the forthcoming commemorative meeting is the resolution adopted without a vote by the 100th Inter-Parliamentary Conference in Moscow last September on the strong action by national parliaments in the year of the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights to ensure the promotion and protection of human rights in the twenty-first century.

Let me also briefly refer to the very valuable activities the United Nations Secretariat is conducting, through its Electoral Assistance Division and Department of Economic and Social Affairs, in the field of the organization, preparation and administration of elections, including follow-up and monitoring in many Member States. This is, of course, an activity in which there is a vast opportunity for increased cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union.

As the results of past conferences have shown, the Inter-Parliamentary Union has been very actively involved in enriching the tasks carried out by the United Nations, adding the parliamentarian dimension, which will once again be confirmed at the conference of presiding officers of national parliaments at the United Nations in the year 2000. That conference will provide the participants with an opportunity to express their views on how national parliaments and several organizations, including the IPU, can work with the United Nations in the new millennium, and also provide an opportunity for the adoption of a solemn act of refounding the IPU.

In this context, I am very proud to mention on this solemn occasion that at the 100th Conference in Moscow, the Council adopted a report of the Executive Committee which included a proposal to constitute a Preparatory Committee for the Conference, composed of presiding officers of several national parliaments and several members of the Executive Committee. Two preparatory meetings are expected to take place in 1999: Austria will host the first one, which is to take place in Vienna from 22 to 23 February 1999; the second will be hosted by Morocco. The speakers of the Parliaments of Bangladesh and Romania have offered to host the third meeting of the Preparatory Committee in the early part of the year 2000.

I would like to conclude by reiterating full support for the action of the Inter-Parliamentary Union and its increased cooperation with the United Nations. Let us hope that the ideal of democracy will be the guiding principle of parliamentarian and political actions in the new millennium.

Ms. Belhaj (Tunisia) (*interpretation from French*): In his report on the work of the Organization submitted to the General Assembly at its present session, Mr. Kofi Annan emphasizes that as part of the endeavour to invigorate the United Nations that he has undertaken with a view to providing a new impetus to the United Nations, he has made a particular effort to establish a mutually beneficial dialogue with the international business community. At the same time, the Secretary-General recalls that engagement with the business community parallels the long-standing and increasingly close working relationships the United Nations has with non-governmental organizations.

We particularly welcome the fact that that focus, which fits within the context of renewing the Organization in the post-war period, is accompanied by a policy aimed at consolidating the bonds of cooperation with regional organizations, or those with a global mission, such as the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), which currently brings together more than 130 national and regional parliaments.

The complementarity that the United Nations has developed through the links it has forged with specialized, regional and interregional organizations is aimed at providing reciprocal and mutually beneficial contributions. This positive exchange has been more fully crystallized in the cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union. That is not surprising, given that parliaments are the direct expression of the popular will and the living expression of civil society, and represent one of the driving forces of the new dynamic that the Secretary-General wants to instil in the Organization at the dawn of the twenty-first century. In this regard, the nature of the objectives and the convergence of views between the universal Organization and the intergovernmental organization account for the accomplishment of such important work, through cooperation, in such a short time. The positive progress in the complementarity between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union is best illustrated by developments in three areas. Whether in the promotion of representative democracy, activities to promote peace and security or the contribution to sustainable development, the praiseworthy work accomplished since the fifty-second session allows us to anticipate broad and promising cooperation.

The first issue that I would like to raise in this respect is the promotion of representative democracy, an area in which the Inter-Parliamentary Union has great expertise. In 1997 the Inter-Parliamentary Union prepared a study on the principles and results of democracy, which culminated in a Universal Declaration on Democracy. The Declaration sets out the fundamental principles of democracy and elaborates on the elements and standards that govern the exercise of democratic government. It also deals with the international dimension of democracy. That standard-setting work of the Inter-Parliamentary Union has served as a foundation for the work of the General Assembly to promote and consolidate new and re-established democracies.

In the context of the promotion of representative democracy, the Inter-Parliamentary Union has supported the efforts of the United Nations in giving assistance and aid to the parliaments of developing countries and of the newly independent States of Central Asia. In this connection, I should like to recall the meeting held in April 1998 in Harare by the Inter-Parliamentary Union in cooperation with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). That meeting, in which the presiding officers of African parliaments participated, was primarily devoted to the contribution of parliaments to democracy in Africa.

In the same context, one of the central themes of the Union's activity relates to the promotion of the participation of women in political life, particularly at the decision-making level. In addition to its action to promote the universal ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women at the national level, the Union is developing, in cooperation with the Committee on the Elimination of

Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the Division for the Advancement of Women, numerous activities for the effective implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action.

The attention being focused on promoting partnership between men and women is accompanied by continued support for the promotion and protection of all human rights. This was evident in, *inter alia*, the resolutions adopted by the Union in the context of the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The participation of the Union in the work of the Diplomatic Conference on the establishment of an International Criminal Court also enabled it to support the setting up of that institution, an effective means of defending the State based on the rule of law.

The maintenance of peace and security is also a high-priority area for cooperation between the Union and the United Nations. The Chamber of Deputies of Tunisia attaches particular interest to that aspect of cooperation between the two organizations, particularly since in the post-cold-war period Africa has been beset by bloody conflicts and torn apart in unprecedented ways. In this respect, I should like to refer to the resolution adopted by the Inter-Parliamentary Union in April 1998 in Windhoek, which expresses the support of the parliamentarians for the United Nations in strengthening the Organization's prevention and early warning mechanisms.

In addition to promoting democracy, the parliamentarians can demonstrate their boldness and imagination in supporting United Nations efforts to promote peace and security. In this connection, we recall the work taken up by the parliamentarians to support the efforts of the United Nations for a total ban on the use of anti-personnel mines. Also, in the Mediterranean region, to which my country belongs, we can refer to the measures undertaken by the Union to support the United Nations in its work of bringing about peace and intercommunal reconciliation in Cyprus. In the same spirit, the representatives of legislative power have institutionalized the inter-parliamentary Conference on Security and Cooperation in the Mediterranean.

Still in the area of cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union, I should also like to hail the Union's commitment to provide firm and specific support for major United Nations conferences, in particular in implementing measures on sustainable development.

Without a doubt, the Union's activities as a whole represent a valuable contribution to the culture of tolerance and to ensuring that values of peace and solidarity among nations take deep root. In this way the Inter-Parliamentary Union is contributing to the dissemination of universal values and principles.

The Inter-Parliamentary Union in this way has contributed to the construction of the bridge between the Dow Jones index and the human development index, as the Secretary-General put it in his report. In the year 2000 a conference of speakers of national parliaments will be held at the United Nations during the Millennium Assembly. That meeting will renew the Union's support of the universal Organization and will also, we are convinced, be able to respond to the Secretary-General's appeal by enriching thinking on the form the Organization will take in the twenty-first century.

Ms. Heptulla (India): We compliment the Secretary-General for the concise but comprehensive document we have before us outlining the intensification and deepening of the cooperation between the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and the United Nations. I consider it a great privilege to speak in support of this cooperation, having been closely associated with it ever since its inception in 1996. The ideals of development, democracy and peace, to which our Union is committed, are fully shared by the United Nations and provide a firm basis for strengthened and enhanced linkages and mutually beneficial cooperation. We need to pool our resources and our experiences to devise common plans of action so as to address the challenges facing the world.

The Inter-Parliamentary Union includes representatives of people untrammelled by their affiliations to a particular political ideology or belief. They come from both Governments and opposition, giving a unique flavour to our deliberations. The IPU thus represents, better than many other forums, the diverse will of the people and, in the true sense of the term, the plurality of humankind.

The possibilities of cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union are enormous. We have noted with great satisfaction the concrete examples of United Nations-IPU cooperation detailed in the Secretary General's report. Last year, speaking on this agenda item, my delegation had pointed out that promotion of democracy at all levels was a key area in which the experience of the IPU could be effectively utilized by the United Nations and its specialized agencies or funds and programmes. We are happy to note that the report mentions it as a field of particularly close cooperation between the two organizations. That the IPU has participated not only in normative work, promoting a better understanding of democracy, but has also been closely involved in several field-level institution-building projects, is a matter of some satisfaction. We would like especially to mention the support extended by the IPU, through the United Nations, in the provision of advisory services and technical assistance to parliaments, either as a part of international efforts for resolution of conflicts or at the direct request of the parliament concerned. The meeting jointly organized in Harare in April this year by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Inter-Parliamentary Union, to identify the contributions that parliaments can make to democracy in Africa and to the mechanisms for strengthening inter-parliamentary cooperation on the continent, was an extremely important step. We look forward to the conclusion in the near future of a multi-year parliamentary support programme between the IPU and UNDP.

Full participation of women in all aspects of economic and social life of our peoples and their political empowerment is one of the guarantees of democracy which has also been recognized fully and supported by the Inter-Parliamentary Union. As a country committed to social uplift, India has enacted significant socially emancipating legislation, including the reservation of one third of seats in locally elected district, municipal and village-level bodies, the panchayats, through constitutional amendments. They have brought to the fore a critical body of women, more than a million strong, which is now taking charge not only of the welfare of their families but of entire communities. UNDP had the opportunity to recognize one of them, two weeks ago here in New York, through its poverty eradication award. We therefore strongly support the meeting of representatives of parliaments, Governments and international agencies that is planned to be held on the occasion of the special session of the General Assembly in June 2000. We also look forward to the event to be jointly convened in December 1999 by the IPU, the United Nations and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, at which an equal number of women and men representatives of Governments, parliaments and various sectors of society will study women's input into and impact on the democratic process. We hope that these joint efforts will lend their weight to the achievement of a goal we all share: achieving equality of women and men in politics, in decision-making and in all other realms of human endeavour.

Since last year, the United Nations has embarked on an ambitious programme of reform and revitalization of its constituent parts. We welcome this, as a vibrant, effective, democratic and responsive United Nations that fully reflects the aspirations and desires of the vast majority of its membership would significantly enhance the content, scope and quality of cooperation between it and the IPU. However, as we have noted before, even a rejuvenated system will not succeed if the resources needed to fully implement its mandates are not made available. It is even more serious to note, from various other reports before this session of the General Assembly, that the financial situation continues to be grim and the Organization remains strapped for cash. Obviously, the bankruptcy or even chronic poverty of the United Nations will have an adverse impact on its activities, including cooperation with the IPU. In our view, the Inter-Parliamentary Union can play a role in redressing this situation by mobilizing the necessary political will to support the United Nations.

Similarly, the IPU can work to guarantee renewed political interest in promoting multilateral development cooperation through the United Nations. It is distressing to observe the steady decrease in the funding of operational activities of the United Nations. We, as parliamentarians, reflect the will of the people of the nations and can work together to ensure the required political will for placing the funding of the United Nations system's operational activities for development on a sound footing. After all, the role of the United Nations in the development of developing countries and its impact on the lives of our citizens constitute the only touchstone on which we will judge the efficiency of the Organization.

As we move inexorably towards the new millennium, we must consider the emerging dimensions and vistas of cooperation between the IPU and the United Nations. The conference of speakers of national parliaments to be organized at the United Nations during the Millennium Assembly is one such event. We must work towards ensuring its success. In our view, the IPU and United Nations should together ensure that the Millennium Assembly is well prepared and that it identifies effective goals for the Organization in the coming millennium while providing the means to achieve them. An obvious goal would be increasing the role of the United Nations in development, *inter alia*, through the promotion of South-South cooperation.

The United Nations and the IPU must also work simultaneously for the sharing of information and knowledge and for the transfer of technology from developed to developing countries so as to bridge the widening gap between them, and to reduce tension and pave the way for growth, peace and better understanding for all humankind.

Another issue of concern to the international community that must be dealt with in the context of the Millennium Assembly is that of weapons of mass destruction. By the twenty-first century, both the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction and the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects will hopefully have received universal or near-universal ratification. Those weapons of mass destruction have been outlawed, but very little progress has been made on the last remaining weapons of mass destruction: nuclear weapons. We should enter into negotiations on a nuclear weapons convention eliminating all nuclear weapons. Adoption of such a convention at the Millennium Assembly would be a crowning glory of the United Nations in the next millennium. We hope that the international community will rise to this challenge.

To conclude, may I once again express my delegation's happiness at the growing cooperation between the IPU and the United Nations. I trust that this cooperation will be further intensified and deepened in coming years. India will be willing to play its part in this process, in the belief that it is not only our endeavour and commitment, but also our duty, to create a better and more prosperous global society through strengthened international cooperation for development. It is with this faith that I commend to the Assembly for unanimous adoption draft resolution A/53/L.12, which has been sponsored by a large number of delegations, including that of India.

Mr. El Daly (Egypt) (*interpretation from Arabic*): It gives me pleasure, as the representative of the Egyptian parliamentary group of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its fifty-third session. My congratulations go also to your friendly country, Uruguay. I am confident that you will guide the Assembly's work at this session with effectiveness and ability. I convey my congratulations also to your predecessor, Mr. Hennadiy Udovenko, President of the Assembly at its fifty-second session, on the fine way in which he guided the work of the Assembly.

I thank the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, for his report on cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union. The report outlines many aspects of the cooperation between the United Nations and the IPU, including conflict prevention, security and cooperation in the Mediterranean region, support for democracy and sustainable social and economic development, follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development, human rights issues and the increasingly important question of globalization.

Mr. Filippi Balestra (San Marino), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Here we should like to refer to the conclusions of the 161st session of the Inter-Parliamentary Council, held at Cairo on 16 September 1997, and to a number of Economic and Social Council documents of July 1998, which set out facets of the cooperation between the two organizations and highlighted the many endeavours of the IPU that in turn bolster United Nations efforts on important international issues.

The Egyptian parliamentary group wishes to reaffirm its full support for cooperation between the United Nations and the IPU. That support is reflected in my delegation's having supported the inclusion of this item in the agenda of the General Assembly, and in its having joined in sponsoring draft resolution A/53/L.12 on cooperation between the United Nations and the IPU.

In recent years, the United Nations has been the target of much criticism for the way in which it addresses numerous international issues because of the varying standards it applies. This has given rise to widespread accusations that the Organization applies a double standard. For parliaments and for peoples, this calls into question the credibility of the international Organization.

The Egyptian parliamentary group wishes to highlight a number of the challenges facing the international Organization — for which we, as parliamentarians and government officials, must find appropriate ways to address. The first of these is nuclear proliferation. With regard to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the question of proliferation is at the forefront of the serious issues posing a threat to international peace and security. Hence the need for all States to abide by the provisions of the

NPT and to accede to the Treaty with a view to achieving its universality and to strengthening the nuclear non-proliferation regime.

The position of the United Nations on this issue is marked by an obvious deficiency. In its resolution 687 (1991), by which it established the United Nations Special Commission (UNSCOM) to verify that Iraq possesses no weapons of mass destruction, the Security Council entrusted the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) with the task of assisting UNSCOM in verification and in the inspection of the sites of such weapons. Paragraph 14 of that resolution indicates that the actions to be taken by Iraq to rid itself of weapons of mass destruction represent a step towards the goal of establishing in the Middle East a zone free from such weapons. Nonetheless, calls to use the provisions of that paragraph to subject Israeli nuclear facilities to IAEA safeguards and to secure Israel's accession to the NPT have not met with enthusiasm either in the Security Council or in other relevant United Nations bodies. This diminishes the Organization's credibility in the eyes of Member States.

In this context, recent developments point up the deficiency of the nuclear non-proliferation regime; this highlights the urgent need to find serious ways of redressing the shortcomings of that regime and enhancing its effectiveness, while avoiding the policy of double standards in this important sphere.

Believing in the importance of the elimination of weapons of mass destruction and nuclear disarmament, Egypt has over the past 30 years called for the creation of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. Then in 1990 it took another initiative calling for freeing the Middle East region from all weapons of mass destruction. We parliamentarians in Egypt emphasize and support this call, which has become a pressing popular quest.

Along with seven other Member States, Egypt also called for the elaboration of a new agenda to revive international commitment to bring about a world free from weapons of mass destruction. We hope that this agenda will command increasing international support to curb the risks posed by these weapons.

Secondly, the Middle East peace process has stagnated for about two years now due to the negative changes in the policies of Israel, represented by its refusal to comply with the principles underpinning the peace process agreed at Madrid and Oslo. Foremost among these principles is the principle of land for peace as a basis for settling the Arab-Israeli conflict. We hope that the agreement signed on 23 October in Washington will represent a positive turning point in the stance of the Israeli Government. We hope also that that Government will be serious about implementing the agreement so that the peace process can be restarted, including the two Lebanese and Syrian tracks, and so that a just, comprehensive and lasting peace can reign supreme in the Middle East region.

In this connection, the Egyptian Parliamentary Group would like to express its full support for the effective role to be played by the United Nations to achieve this lofty goal and to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, from which the Middle East region suffered previously.

Thirdly, the Egyptian Parliamentary Group supports the efforts of the United Nations to eradicate international terrorism in all its forms and manifestations and the pursuit and punishment of its perpetrators. It also calls for enhancing the effectiveness of the relevant bodies of the Organization so they can combat terrorism and those who support it, and contain their sources of financing wherever they may be located. It is also important that States that shelter terrorists on many pretexts, including human rights and religious persecution — matters to which Egypt, as a Government and as a people, attaches special attention and importance — should desist from this practice and realize the gravity of this matter, which endangers all States of the world.

In this context, the Egyptian Parliamentary Group would like to emphasize the need to mobilize official international and popular support for the initiative taken by President Mohamed Hosni Mubarak, the President of Egypt, to hold an international conference to combat terrorism under the auspices of the United Nations in 1999.

Fourthly, many States are subjected to sanctions in accordance with Security Council resolutions. Those sanctions, which are the result of specific circumstances, are designed to achieve the commitment by those States that violate international legitimacy to return to the general framework established by the international community in order to preserve international peace and security. Hence it is natural that sanctions and embargoes must be lifted from certain States, such as Iraq and Libya, as soon as they abide by Security Council resolutions. It is also important to conduct a comprehensive review of the current sanctions regimes.

Fifthly, with regard to the Lockerbie question, which resulted in the imposition of sanctions on Libya, a positive move by the parties to the conflict to settle this problem has become a pressing matter dictated by requirements of security and stability. Hence we call on all concerned parties to demonstrate further flexibility and to start trying the suspects in accordance with the guarantees and conventions agreed to by the parties concerned in order to achieve the long-awaited solution to that problem.

Sixthly, the new international system has brought about many new phenomena that have affected developing countries. With respect to the phenomenon of globalization, despite the fact that some developing countries have achieved the requisite integration into the international economy through fostering their competitive abilities and trade openness to the world, it is regrettable that certain developed countries have placed tariff barriers to the basic exports of the developing countries. This greatly constrains the ability of the developing countries to access Western markets and reap the fruits of globalization, which must benefit all States without exception. The Egyptian Parliamentary Group calls for a more equitable universal trading system based on the scrupulous application of international conventions.

Having presented some of the challenges facing this international Organization and ideas to resolve some of the problems that give rise to tension and instability in the international community, I hope we can cooperate in reaching appropriate solutions to those problems as well as others so that they will not become chronic and intractable and thus further burden our international Organization. We hope that the United Nations will devote its full attention to international cooperation issues calling for the pooling of efforts, such as issues of development in all its aspects, the conservation of the environment and the quest for peace, stability and security, which we are all working to foster.

In order for the United Nations to achieve the noble aims I referred to earlier, we call on the Member States that are indebted to the Organization to pay their arrears as soon as possible. This will enable the Organization to implement the programmes and activities entrusted to it. The Member States should also pay their contributions to the budget of the Organization in full, on time and without conditions, and fulfil their legal obligations in accordance with Article 17 of the Charter.

Mr. Saliba (Malta): As this is the first time that I am addressing the fifty-third session of the General Assembly, I should like to take the opportunity to congratulate Mr. Didier Opertti on his election and on the able manner in which he is conducting our work.

Having read the report of the Secretary-General on cooperation between this Organization and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), I note with satisfaction that much progress has been achieved. My country welcomes the practical measures already taken, such as the establishment of the Union's liaison office in New York earlier this year. Increasing cooperation between the Inter-Parliamentary Union and the various organizations of the United Nations system is another very important step forward, and we hope that this cooperation will be widened and strengthened in future.

We also look forward to the planned IPU conference of speakers of national parliaments in the year 2000 in the context of the Millennium Assembly.

The IPU has been very active in the promotion of democracy. The adoption of the Universal Declaration on Democracy, which we strongly support, is an important and significant Declaration. The consolidation of the democratic process, with all that it entails, is a major step forward towards the full realization of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

My delegation believes that that Declaration underscores the relevance of the initiatives that the IPU has taken on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. In his address during the general debate, my Deputy Prime Minister stated in reference to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights:

> "There is, however, a significant lack in this Declaration. It is an instrument with no judicial mechanisms or sanctions. Has the time arrived to learn from the experience of the regional human rights conventions, in particular the European Convention, which through its mechanisms instituted the European Court of Human Rights and through the right of individual petition further guarantees a judicial process aimed at ensuring effective enforcement?" (*A/53/PV.19*)

The cooperation between the IPU and the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, as well as other initiatives of the IPU in this field, would therefore be fulfilled if the IPU could study ways in which national parliaments can cooperate and work towards creating such a mechanism.

Within the IPU, Malta has consistently and insistently worked to raise awareness of the importance of security and cooperation in the Mediterranean. We note with satisfaction that this item is given the importance that it merits. We look forward to the third IPU conference on all issues covered by the Conference on Security and Cooperation in the Mediterranean.

We also note the IPU's increasing interest in gender issues. Unfortunately, women have always been the ones that have benefited least from the exercise of individual human rights. Greater participation in national parliaments by women should certainly provide an important impetus for changing this state of affairs. Our last national elections, held in September of this year, resulted in an increased number of women in our Parliament. While the proportion is still low, these results show increasing participation by women in the decision-making processes in my country.

The establishment of local councils and the participation of women in these councils, we believe, has led to the increased representation of women in our Parliament.

May I conclude by thanking the Secretary-General of the IPU for his intervention. Malta's commitment to the IPU remains firm. We are proud to be among the large number of countries that have sponsored the draft resolution before the Assembly.

Mr. Aleskerov (Azerbaijan) (*interpretation from Russian*): It is a great honour for me to address such a representative and eminent audience. Taking advantage of this opportunity, I would like to link the subject we are discussing today to the events that are taking place in our country.

Since restoring its independence, Azerbaijan has embarked on building a secular, democratic State based on the rule of law and with a market economy. In its foreign policy, Azerbaijan — having ruled out the option of safeguarding its own interests at the expense of others — is developing its relations with all countries on the basis of peaceful coexistence, the balance of interests, good neighbourliness, respect for sovereignty and non-interference in one another's internal affairs.

Since its independence, Azerbaijan has become a member of numerous international organizations, such as the United Nations, the Inter-Parliamentary Union, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the Black Sea Economic Cooperation and a number of others. Participation in the work of these organizations is extremely useful for young States that are pursuing democratic reforms. We are studying other States' experiences and directing our efforts towards bringing our legislation in line with the international legal norms and standards. A vivid example of this policy is the abolition of the death penalty in Azerbaijan, an event without precedent throughout the East.

The democratization of political life has created a solid basis for the functioning of a free and multi-party system. Today there are more than 30 political parties active in Azerbaijan. The number of mass media organizations has greatly increased, and more than 500 of them are now registered in Azerbaijan.

The Government has created all the necessary conditions for the free development of the human rights movement. To strengthen the legal human rights instruments, on 22 February this year, the head of State, Mr. Heydar Aliyev, issued an edict on measures to ensure the freedoms and rights of citizens of the Azerbaijan Republic.

In terms of domestic policy, the Government is unequivocally seeking the democratization of the political system and the liberalization of the economy. The Constitution that was adopted in 1995 through a country-wide referendum fully guarantees citizens' political, economic, social, religious and cultural rights and freedoms. In 1995, for the first time in the history of Azerbaijan, democratic parliamentary elections were conducted on the basis of a multi-party system. The deputies in our Parliament represent nine political parties, of which four are opposition parties. In early October this year, presidential elections took place in Azerbaijan. There were six presidential candidates. As was expected, Mr. Heydar Aliyev won a resounding victory.

Last year, within the framework of the reform of the judiciary, the legislature of the country adopted two important laws: the act on courts and judges and the act on the constitutional court. Laws on local self-government, municipal-council elections, the bar, the prosecutor's office, the police and other matters are about to be adopted.

Definite success has also been achieved in building a free and socially oriented market economy. The inflow of foreign investments, growth of foreign trade, entering into oil contracts, successfully privatizing small enterprises and agrarian reform have revitalized the economy.

Returning to the subject of cooperation with international organizations, I would like to express our satisfaction at the fact that other former Republics of the Soviet Union, in particular the Republic of Armenia, have also become members of these organizations. It is my hope that the participation of our countries in the global and pan-European structures will help us find a way to settle our bilateral problems. In this connection, with an eye to our regional problems, I would like to mention in particular the importance of implementing the principles set forth in the 1975 Helsinki Final Act concerning the inviolability of borders and the territorial integrity of States.

It is also my conviction that cooperation between international organizations is necessary in order to solve a whole gamut of problems that arise during regional conflicts, above all those relating to the fight against terrorism and the prevention of illegal arms transfers, which directly affect our region.

Not wishing to tax the Assembly's patience, I will not dwell at length on our internal problems, the most important of them being the problem in the Nagorny Karabakh region of Azerbaijan. Let me just say that despite the four United Nations resolutions — the first of which was adopted as far back as 1993 — demanding the immediate, complete and unconditional withdrawal of the Armenian armed forces from all occupied territories of Azerbaijan, and despite the decisions of the 1996 Lisbon summit, today 20 per cent of our territory still remains occupied by that neighbouring country, and out of the 7.5 million people of Azerbaijan, more than 1 million are refugees and internally displaced persons. Nevertheless, we are determined to continue to seek a peaceful settlement of the conflict, while firmly defending our territorial integrity. That is why the support of international organizations in this matter is extremely important to us. We must not allow the emergence in international relations of a precedent of the violation of the territorial integrity of States or of their dismemberment due to glaring failures to comply with international norms.

As for the item under discussion, Azerbaijan welcomes close cooperation between international organizations, in this case the Inter-Parliamentary Union and the United Nations. We believe that such cooperation will contribute to ensuring the broad participation of all States in strengthening peace and cooperation, in particular by supporting the goals of the United Nations.

Cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union should be considered an imperative of the times, as reaffirmed by the ever-increasing interaction of these two organizations and reflected in the 1996 cooperation agreement between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union and in General Assembly resolution 52/7.

In recent years, cooperation between the two organizations has been significantly stepped up, with special focus on such areas as the strengthening of democracy, respect for human rights, ensuring peace and security, economic and social development and so forth.

We welcome the continuing development of links between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union, which should take concrete form for practical interaction at the conference of speakers of national parliaments to be held in the year 2000 at United Nations Headquarters in New York.

Mr. Minoves-Triquell (Andorra) (*interpretation from French*): Today we will be adopting a draft resolution concerning cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), which, among other things, welcomes the IPU's initiative to hold a meeting of speakers of national parliaments at United Nations Headquarters during the Millennium Assembly in the year 2000. My country, which has one of the oldest parliaments in Europe — the General Council, founded in 1419 — welcomes that happy event. At a time when media images are so important, the symbolism of the two branches of power — the legislative and the executive — coming together at the threshold of the third millennium to reaffirm their commitment to the Organization in which the hopes of the peoples of the world are vested will undoubtedly provide a powerful boost to the United Nations.

(*spoke in English*)

In a time when globalization is an unavoidable reality in every corner of the world; when economies miles apart suffer together the effects of a localized crisis; when the inhabitants of Ulan Bator can discuss current events via the Internet with those in Andorra la Vella, Buenos Aires or in Cape Town; and when the clothes we wear, the food we eat or the books we read are not from our neighbouring regions but from the global community that humanity is fast becoming — in this time of acute complexity in international economic and political relations, Governments of sovereign States have had to absorb a profusion of new information and set up structures prepared to cope with the new global village. Parliaments are also following this path and are having to adapt their information-gathering methods as well as, sometimes, their traditional day-to-day relationship with the respective executive branches of government.

The President returned to the Chair.

In expressing the will of the people who freely elect them, parliamentarians in representative democratic societies must, within the salutary separation of powers that keeps alive the philosophy of checks and balances, have at their disposal advanced tools and information to cope with the new, interdependent world in which we live. The Inter-Parliamentary Union definitely provides a way for parliaments of the world to know each other better and to interact and learn from each other's experiences. An increased presence and voice of the IPU at the United Nations will give our parliaments the necessary information to respond back home to the challenges this Organization faces, especially in this time of reform.

The United Nations, suffers from a lack of exposure. We sometimes appear too remote, in our daily work by the East River of New York, for a continuous evaluation of and response to our actions by parliaments under our national jurisdictions.

The yearly visit to United Nations Headquarters organized by the IPU is therefore an excellent initiative that we must encourage. Since the beginning of this auspicious cooperation between the United Nations and IPU, Andorran members of parliament, from all parties, have attended these meetings, thus asserting the commitment of our country to the enhanced transparency necessary for the future health of the Organization.

(*spoke in Spanish*)

The Principality of Andorra has supported unambiguously the draft resolution we are about to adopt on cooperation between the United Nations and the IPU. During the process of enlisting sponsors for this draft resolution, led with great success by our neighbour, Spain, our delegation worked actively to ensure that its acceptance would be as broad as possible.

Today we commend those who are working steadily to intensify cooperation between Governments and parliaments in the international arena of the United Nations. In particular, we commend Mr. Miguel Angel Martínez, who, with his good humour and tireless optimism, firmly leads the way for the IPU; Mr. Pierre Cornillon, who guided the early stages of United Nations-IPU cooperation; and his successor, Mr. Anders B.Johnsson, who has reaffirmed his organization's keen desire to be increasingly present in New York. They may always rely on Andorra's support.

Mr. Kolby (Norway): International organizations, too, have to adapt to a changing world. My Government welcomes the Secretary-General's initiative to adapt the United Nations to a new global alliance of Governments, civil society and, not least, parliamentarians.

The cooperation agreement signed in 1996 between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) provides parliaments with an opportunity to become more actively involved in the work of the United Nations. It is our opinion that adding a parliamentary dimension to the planning of future work in the United Nations might not only benefit the activities of the Organization, but might also enhance the understanding of the United Nations principles, as well as the relevance of United Nations decisions.

Moreover, many of today's political issues cannot be confined to a particular country. Parliaments and parliamentarians the world over need to complement their traditional national perspectives with an international outlook.

The report of the Secretary-General on cooperation between the United Nations and the IPU indicates that the framework agreement is being fulfilled with substantive and important activities. The IPU's support in areas such as conflict prevention, human rights and promotion of representative democracy has increased the effectiveness and relevance of United Nations activities in these areas.

In particular, I would like to commend the IPU for valuable technical support provided to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in its effort to promote democracy and strengthen democratic institutions in developing countries Indeed, support for democratic processes is key to the United Nations in fulfilling its mandate within the areas of peace and security and economic development.

The United Nations agenda includes some of the urgent concerns of the day. During this year's session of the General Assembly, the issue of an evolving single global economy has been debated. The current world economic crisis clearly illustrates that we are far from understanding the powerful forces of globalization. Furthermore, it is evident that the multilateral system handling the current global economic instability needs to be strengthened. It is the view of my Government that the time has come to rethink the role of existing international institutions in this regard. There is also an urgent need for innovative measures to influence speculative activities in the financial markets.

It is the view of my Government that the immediate challenges in dealing with the financial turmoil are important. However, this should not entail a reduced focus on long-term development efforts in low-income countries.

Furthermore, there are financial crises that hardly reach the headlines: those that are caused by the severe debt burden of many of the poorest countries. My Government recently presented a comprehensive debt-relief strategy for the poorest and most heavily indebted countries. The strategy provides for unilateral Norwegian debt forgiveness, on top of multilaterally agreed debt relief, in cases in which a credible exit solution has been established. We encourage other creditor countries to put in place similar arrangements.

The United Nations should be at the centre of various processes dealing with globalization issues and should, in this regard, be able to draw upon the resources and expertise of all concerned parties. My Government invites parliamentarians and the IPU to join forces with the United Nations and others in an effort to maximize the positive effects of globalization while minimizing the negative aspects.

The Conference of speakers of national parliaments in the year 2000 will provide parliamentary support to the United Nations Millennium Assembly, at which the issue of globalization undoubtedly will be an important issue.

Mr. Shahid (Bangladesh): I have had the privilege of participating in different events organized by the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU). I have great admiration for the work done by the organization. It provides a very useful forum for parliamentarians to exchange ideas and benefit from dialogue on issues of relevance to the entire world community. Parliaments of different countries work together at the international level through the Inter-Parliamentary Union.

Much work done by the Inter-Parliamentary Union has relevance to the United Nations. The IPU's contributions to such issues as peace and security, democracy, development, human rights and gender equality complement and support the work of the United Nations on these issues. That is why it is all the more important that the IPU have excellent cooperation and working relations with the United Nations.

We are happy to note that, ever since the conclusion of a cooperation agreement in 1996 between the IPU and the United Nations, there has been increasing interaction between these two organizations. The opening of the IPU Liaison Office in New York in March this year greatly facilitated the process. The IPU's annual meetings at the United Nations, like the one we had last Monday, are also very useful in furthering our understanding of the issues taken up by the General Assembly.

I thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report on cooperation between the IPU and the United Nations. He has identified the major fields in which cooperation has been most productive.

We feel encouraged by the supportive role of the IPU for activities of the United Nations to promote global peace and security, in particular, its role in the prevention of conflicts and its efforts to secure a worldwide ban on anti-personnel landmines.

In the area of promotion of representative democracy, the Inter-Parliamentary Union has developed considerable expertise. The Universal Declaration on Democracy adopted by the IPU in 1997 summarizes, in a nutshell, the elements and standards of democracy. The United Nations can benefit from the experience of the IPU in institution-building through advisory services and technical assistance to national parliaments and the promotion of inter-parliamentary cooperation. The IPU can also contribute effectively to integrating a gender perspective in the United Nations work on better governance and increased and effective representation of women in politics and decision-making.

The two organizations should also look for ways and means to increase further their cooperation in the field of human rights. One issue on which there could effective cooperation is national implementation of international human rights mechanisms. As legislators, the parliamentarians have a key role to play in this regard. Another issue on which cooperation would be useful is the promotion of the right to development.

Sustainable economic and social development is an area in which there could be effective cooperation between the IPU and United Nations agencies. We welcome the specialized inter-parliamentary conference on the issue of attaining objectives of the World Food Summit through a sustainable development strategy, to be held from 29 November to 2 December 1998. It marks further cooperation between the IPU and the United Nations.

We also welcome the proposed tripartite meeting of representatives of parliaments, Governments and intergovernmental organizations to review the progress made in implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development. This will provide parliamentarians an opportunity to have a clear idea of objectives attained and the work yet to be done.

Let me, in conclusion, mention that, as we prepare for the next millennium, continuing cooperation between the two organizations would help us find ways to address the challenges at hand. In this context, we believe that the proposed IPU conference of speakers of national parliaments in the year 2000 is a welcome initiative. It will be all the more useful as it is intended to be held with the objective of providing parliamentary support to the proposed Millennium Assembly to be convened by the United Nations.

Ms. Arystanbekova (Kazakhstan): Allow me, on behalf of the delegation of Kazakhstan, to express our gratitude to the Secretary-General for the report he has prepared on cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU).

I should also like to thank Mr. Inocencio Arias, the Permanent Representative of Spain to the United Nations, for introducing draft resolution A/53/L.12, of which Kazakhstan is a sponsor.

My delegation notes with satisfaction the progress achieved in strengthening cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union since the signing on 24 June 1996 of the cooperation agreement between the two organizations. The information given in the report of the Secretary-General on concrete steps and actions taken in the context of cooperation between the United Nations and the IPU provides evidence of this progress. In this connection, the delegation of Kazakhstan fully supports the positive developments in interrelations between the United Nations and the IPU, which were noted by the parliamentarians during the Conferences of the IPU held this year in Windhoek and Moscow.

We also support the measures undertaken by the IPU, in close cooperation with the United Nations, aimed at the promotion of peace and security, sustainable development, observance of human rights, good governance and representative democracy. The joint and mutually supportive activity of the two organizations is a striking example of the strengthening of cooperation between the United Nations and civil society.

The IPU, whose membership encompasses the parliaments of 137 countries of the world, possesses great potential for providing technical assistance and advisory services to national parliaments. The close cooperation of the IPU with the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the International Labour Organization and other organizations is becoming substantial. The concept of cooperation between parliaments and Governments at the international level, set forth in the cooperation agreement between the United Nations and the IPU, is being further developed. This was considerably facilitated by the opening in March 1998 of the IPU Liaison Office with the United Nations in New York.

A positive impetus to the active participation of civil society in international activity will in our view be provided by the holding in the year 2000 of the conference of speakers of national parliaments. As the report of the Secretary-General indicates, this initiative is intended to be held in conjunction with, and to provide parliamentary support to, the proposed Millennium Assembly to be convened by the United Nations in September 2000.

Since becoming a member of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, Kazakhstan has regularly taken an active part in all the conferences, forums and other activities conducted within the framework of the IPU and its committees. The Chairman of the Senate of Kazakhstan's Parliament participated in the work of the 97th IPU Conference as head of the delegation of the Inter-Parliamentary Assembly of the countries members of the Commonwealth of Independent States. Members of Kazakhstan's Parliament participated in the specialized IPU Conference on education, science, culture and communications in Paris, the Conference on partnership between men and women in politics in New Delhi, the forum of parliamentarians in New York, and the international seminar, entitled "Implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child in

Central Asia and Kazakhstan", which was organized jointly by the IPU and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

Evidence of Kazakhstan's growing authority in the Inter-Parliamentary Union was the election of the Chairman of the Committee on Environmental Issues and Utilization of Nature of the Majlis — the Assembly of our Parliament — to membership in the Committee for Sustainable Development at the 97th IPU Conference in Seoul. Another representative from Kazakhstan's Parliament was elected regional representative of the Group of Central and Eastern European countries in the elections for the Coordinating Committee of Women Parliamentarians at the IPU Conference in Moscow.

The political and economic reforms under way in Kazakhstan are promoting the strengthening of our cooperation with the IPU. From the podium of the Union's international forums, our parliamentarians have more than once declared Kazakhstan's intention of continuing its progressive movement towards a market economy and a democratic society, giving real content to the rights and freedoms of citizens. The Inter-Parliamentary Union welcomed the information that Kazakhstan is a party to 18 multilateral treaties in the field of human rights, including the United Nations Conventions against torture, on the elimination of racial discrimination, on the prevention of the crime of genocide and on the elimination of discrimination against women, all of which it ratified in 1998.

In statements at the Union's conferences and in its committees, the delegation of Kazakhstan, in emphasizing the important role of parliamentarians in promoting the solution of the urgent problems of maintaining peace and international security and of economic and social development, constantly stresses the critical situation of the regions of the Aral Sea and the former Semipalatinsk nuclear testing ground and the need for emergency measures to save them from extremely severe environmental crisis.

One of the important areas in which the United Nations is cooperating closely with the IPU is the promotion of representative democracy. In this connection, I should like to note that Kazakhstan's leadership is currently taking steps to build a democratic State ruled by law and that this will undoubtedly promote a strengthening of Kazakhstan's cooperation with the IPU.

On 30 September this year the President of Kazakhstan, Mr. Nursultan Nazarbaev, in his address to the people, proposed a broad programme for the democratization of the country's political system, including, together with other measures, a clear-cut interaction between the executive, legislative and judicial branches of power; a considerable increase in the role of the bicameral Parliament and of political parties; strengthening of the responsibility of the Government; and strengthening of the judicial system. Accordingly, a bill on the introduction of amendments and additions to the Constitution of the Republic of Kazakhstan was submitted to Parliament and was adopted on 7 October after prolonged discussions in Parliament. The adoption of this Act was preceded by intensive work in the committees of both houses of Kazakhstan's Parliament, the Senate and the Majlis.

Under the terms of the Act, in order to ensure the all-round participation of Kazakhstan's political parties in elections, to give citizens a chance of becoming full-fledged participants in the political process and to bring representatives of the political parties into the membership of the lower house of Parliament, the Majlis, provision has been made for an increase in its membership to 77 deputies.

To match the increase in the size of the Majlis, the number of members of the upper house of Parliament, the Senate, is also being increased. To ensure the stability of State power, the term of office of deputies in the Majlis is being increased to five years, and the term of deputies in the Senate to six.

The new wording of the Constitution, along with other additions and amendments, also provides for such democratic standards as the establishment of a mixed majority; proportional system for elections to Parliament; the elimination of the requirement for more than 50 per cent of electors to take part in the elections; the implementation of a number of measures to strengthen parliamentary control over the work of members of the Government; the introduction of a jury system and the approval of democratic standards in the activity of the Supreme Judicial Council; and the possibility of electing the leaders of local executive bodies.

In recognition of the growing role of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) in carrying on the activity of the United Nations, and again confirming Kazakhstan's devotion to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the Organization, I should like to express our conviction that the further fruitful and effective cooperation between national parliaments at the international level within the IPU will play a significant role in achieving the purposes of the United Nations.

My delegation is convinced that the adoption of draft resolution A/53/L.12, entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union", which is before us for consideration today, will serve to further advance and strengthen cooperation between the United Nations and the IPU.

Allow me, in this connection, to express the hope that the draft resolution will be adopted by consensus.

Mr. Ibrahim (Indonesia): It is indeed a great privilege for my delegation to speak in support of cooperation between the between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU). Such cooperation between the IPU, which represents the core of a nation — its people — and the United Nations, whose membership consists of States, should be seen as an imperative necessity.

We are coming to the end of this millennium during which we welcomed the end of the cold war with great expectations and saw the potential for the creation of a more stable and secure world order and globalized prosperity. To our dismay and disappointment, however, on the eve of a new century, we find that we have fallen short of those lofty expectations, and a world disorder characterized by numerous conflicts and unbearable suffering has persisted in many parts of the world. Furthermore, the awesome force of globalization, propelled by science and technology, instead of serving to unify humankind in a decisive assault against the persistent, systemic problems of our time, is being used to press the advantage of the strong over the weak, thereby widening the gap between the developed and the developing world. Further compounding the situation is the world economy, which is on the brink of recession in the developed and developing countries alike. It is against the background of these hard and undeniable realities that cooperation between the IPU and the United Nations, each with its uniqueness and characteristics, should be further enhanced. In this context, it is gratifying to note from the report of the Secretary-General contained in document A/53/458 that during the past year the two organizations undertook several joint and mutually reinforcing actions in various areas.

Still, the possibilities for enhanced cooperation between them are considerable. Specific areas have been identified in the report and deserve our serious consideration — especially our cooperation for the promotion of peace and security, representative democracy and sustainable economic and social development. One modality to achieve these objectives would be to follow up on major United Nations conferences and summits and to implement their conclusions and recommendations.

Our approach to the twenty-first century calls for mutually beneficial cooperation among States based on dialogue and negotiations. The channels of deliberations between the developed and developing countries need to be revived. The international community should renew its commitment to the Agenda for Development and respond more effectively to the important issues relating to socio-economic progress. Although initially such an approach would seem to benefit the developing countries, in the long run, positive changes in the welfare of the peoples in developing countries will be in the best interest of the international community as a whole.

Dialogue and negotiations are crucial to the realization of our common interests. Striving for democratization based on universal principles and implementing change at the national level on the basis of a country's cultural background and level of advancement are vital to ensure smooth development for the people's welfare. In adopting such approaches, the United Nations can provide the forum within the framework of a paradigm of equal participation and representation of United Nations Member States, as well as among United Nations agencies themselves.

Intensified cooperation between the United Nations and the IPU is essential for an effective, vibrant, modern and reformed United Nations which is responsive to the concerns of the vast majority of its Members — the developing countries. Indonesia therefore supports the recent proposals and measures that the international community is considering to revitalize and further strengthen the Organization. However, reforms cannot be a substitute for the provision of adequate resources to the United Nations to carry out its mandated tasks. They cannot constitute simply a cost-cutting exercise. In this context, my delegation recalls that numerous conferences of the Inter-Parliamentary Union have called on the international community to provide the United Nations with requisite financial, human and technical resources.

We have high hopes that these appeals will be met in the not-too-distant future.

In conclusion, may I express my delegation's satisfaction at the present stage of cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union. It is our expectation that this cooperation will be further intensified and strengthened in the coming years. May I assure the Assembly that Indonesia will be more than willing to play its part in the process. It is in this context that my delegation would like to commend to the Assembly the unanimous adoption of the draft resolution contained in document A/53/L.12.

Mr. Somavía (Chile) *(interpretation from Spanish)*: Sometimes in the General Assembly we encounter topics of great importance that do not receive all the political attention or attention of public opinion outside of this Hall that they deserve. This meeting is an example of this.

For this reason I wanted to be here in person to express on behalf of the Government of Chile and of all the political parties represented in the National Congress our unreserved support for the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU).

For several years, many of us in the United Nations have felt that relations with the IPU should be much closer; indeed, we feel that the Inter-Parliamentary Union deserves special status in keeping with its position as the only world organization of parliaments that represents not only parliamentarians but also the parliamentary institutions that are established by our respective constitutions.

Since William Randal Cremer and Frédéric Passy, both of them Nobel peace prize laureates, conceived it in 1889, this visionary initiative has grown to represent more than 100 democratically elected national parliaments. Politically speaking, it represents thousands and thousands of parliamentarians backed by millions and millions of freely cast votes. The Inter-Parliamentary Union is an extraordinary fount of democratic representation.

We in the General Assembly are rightly proud that the Charter was signed on behalf of "We, the peoples of the United Nations". But we must recognize that, wherever political circumstances permit, those peoples vote year after year in every corner of the world to elect their representatives to national parliaments. In that light, let me make a straightforward but, in my view, key statement: the United Nations cannot treat the Inter-Parliamentary Union as though it were just another non-governmental organization. That attitude cannot stand up to dispassionate, up-to-date political analysis. The representative nature of the IPU is unquestionable. Its legitimacy is beyond dispute. Its tradition is an honourable one. It was established before the United Nations, indeed before the League of Nations. It was the first permanent forum for multilateral political negotiations.

Chile is participating in this debate to support the draft resolution before the Assembly on this item. But we are here also to say that we need to reflect seriously on the Union's status in its relationship with the United Nations. We should find the creativity, imagination and political will to enable the parliaments of the world to participate in our debates with the dignity warranted by their democratic representative nature and their political importance.

Let me continue with some personal remarks. I shall never forget the message of the IPU to the World Summit for Social Development in 1995, over whose Preparatory Committee I had the honour to preside. That message stated with crystal clarity that we must

> "build new foundations for human security which ensure the security of people — in their homes, in their jobs, in their communities and in their environment".

The message noted too that we must "reconcile ... concerns of equity with those of efficiency".

More than three years after Copenhagen, it is unfortunately clear that everything said there about the dangers of unbridled globalization is coming true. For the future, it is important not to repeat the mistakes of the past. In my view, the most important thing is to recognize that no single agency of the multilateral system, with its own interpretation of the crisis and its own proposals for resolving it, has the least chance of stabilizing the world's uncertain economic and social situation. We cannot continue offering sectoral solutions to interdependent, structural and systemic problems. To the contrary, only a holistic, integrated vision can yield solutions. A whole range of sensibilities must be expressed around the table. The financial concerns of the International Monetary Fund, the development needs articulated by the United Nations Development Programme and the World Bank, the trade dimension that falls within the responsibility of the World Trade Organization, and demands for more and better jobs and for personal security as articulated by the International Labour Organization.

In that context, some words I had the honour to address to the Union when it met at Copenhagen retain their validity:

> "One of the great challenges of the fine legislative task you embody is to ensure that the law responds to changing social needs, that the law is a modern, dynamic instrument responsive to people's needs, and that the law leads to and paves the way for change and is not a source of paralysis and regression."

Let me make four specific proposals. First, increasing numbers of parliamentarians should be included in delegations to the General Assembly. Secondly, following the conference of speakers of national parliaments in the year 2000, there should be an annual meeting of the Inter-Parliamentary Union as part of the General Assembly session, with an agenda of timely items agreed upon in conjunction with the Secretary-General. Thirdly, we should pursue our work on the idea of a permanent parliamentary chamber within the structure of the United Nations. And finally, two or three topics of importance to the United Nations and the specialized agencies should be selected; all members of the Union would discuss these with a view to making specific contributions to the United Nations system.

I shall end as I began: it is an honour for me today to address the Assembly on the question of cooperation with the Inter-Parliamentary Union. But more than anything else, I wish the intellectual and political agenda of the United Nations to include the question of the United Nations granting the Union a new status in the future, a status consonant with its political importance and giving full and proper value to the representative nature and democratic legitimacy of what is the oldest multilateral political organization in the world. I hope that this will soon take place.

Mr. Filippi Balestra (San Marino): I should like to thank the delegation of Spain for presenting this year the draft resolution on "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union".

The Republic of San Marino considers the cooperation between these two organizations essential since they are closely connected and complementary. One of the weaknesses of the United Nations is that, being an Organization of States, it sometimes does not pay enough attention to the interests of the single citizen but favours a more advantageous solution for the Government. The Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), an organization of parliamentarians, gives us a different perspective on the issue — the perspective of representatives of individuals or groups of people.

Furthermore, the IPU has a complementary function to the United Nations to inform the work of the United Nations at the national level. We are convinced that the United Nations valuable contribution to economic and social development in the last 50 years is sometimes not quite recognized. The cooperation between the United Nations and the IPU is therefore fundamental as a source of exchange of experiences and information.

San Marino welcomes the report of the Secretary-General and takes note with satisfaction of the improved relations between the United Nations and the IPU in the past year. We are convinced that the newly opened liaison office to the United Nations in New York will represent a meaningful link between the two organizations.

The relationship between the IPU and the United Nations could also make a relevant contribution to the new and restored democracies. It will help implement programmes of information in support of new government systems. The IPU experience, spread through reliable United Nations channels, may facilitate the assertion of democratic institutions in new parliaments.

My delegation and my country will follow with great interest the conference of presiding officers of national parliaments that is to take place in conjunction with the United Nations Millennium Assembly. This initiative will provide valuable support for the successful outcome of this project.

Finally, I should like to emphasize the importance of the cooperation between the IPU and United Nations agencies. The two formal agreements of cooperation between IPU and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and between IPU and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) formalize the important links that already exist. The results of these agreements will give fresh impetus to important initiatives in the interest of the well-being and progress of the international community.

San Marino supports the beginning of discussions to formalize the cooperation agreement between the IPU and the International Labour Organization (ILO), in particular in the field of employment, where the collaboration of the parliamentary representatives is more visible.

San Marino is very active in the work of the IPU and hopes that this cooperation will be enhanced. This link will allow the United Nations to listen to more voices and turn the needs of people into action.

Mr. Zmeevski (Russian Federation) (*interpretation from Russian*): The period that has elapsed since the discussion at the previous session of the General Assembly of the question of cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) has been marked by increased activity in the interaction between both organizations on a very broad range of problems, from conflict prevention to gender issues.

A substantive contribution to resolving the questions currently facing the international community was made by the 100th IPU Conference, which took place in Moscow from 6 to 12 September last. More than 700 parliamentarians from 123 countries participated, including 51 presiding officers of parliaments and representatives of 29 international organizations, including the United Nations.

The message of welcome to Conference participants was sent by the President of the Russian Federation, Boris Yeltsin. The Moscow forum — the most representative in the history of the IPU, the oldest union of parliamentarians in the world — had a largely positive outcome and yielded significant results. In the assessment of participants, the Conference's results promoted the further strengthening of inter-parliamentary cooperation and followed along the lines of the major areas of activity of the United Nations.

The resolution adopted at the Conference, entitled "Strong action by national parliaments in the year of the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights to ensure the promotion of all human rights in the twenty-first century", provided an assessment of the progress achieved during the last 50 years in the area of human rights. It contains an appeal for a further stepping up of efforts of parliaments in this area and rejects double standards in approaches to human rights.

The representatives drew up a far-ranging programme for parliamentary action, including legislative measures aimed at enhancing the effectiveness of the protection of human rights. Also adopted were recommendations to hold in certain countries special sessions devoted to the anniversary of the Declaration, in order to form parliamentary committees on monitoring compliance with human rights and to consider the question of organizing conferences of representatives of the relevant parliamentary bodies. The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Inter-Parliamentary Union also reached an agreement on continued cooperation following the outcome of the Moscow meeting.

At the meeting of women parliamentarians held within the framework of the Conference and in the light of the recommendations of the Division for the Advancement of Women of the United Nations Secretariat, concrete proposals were drawn up aimed at ensuring the effective participation of women in public life, thereby enabling them fully to enjoy their political, economic and social rights.

Serious attention was devoted also at the Conference to the question of combating illegal drug trafficking and organized crime.

The resolution on the problem of water resources recommended that parliaments adopt the necessary legislative measures to prevent the water-resource problem from hindering the sustainable development of humankind. It also reflected the dominant view concerning the development of cooperation through the United Nations, including the joint search for economically acceptable and ecologically sound solutions in this area.

The Conference approved the reports of a number of special committees of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, including those on human rights violations involving parliamentarians, in which resolutions were adopted regarding the fate of 255 legislators from 16 countries; on the question of the Middle East; on the monitoring of the situation in Cyprus; and on promoting respect for international law.

The Moscow forum's focus on prospects for the future is reflected in the intensification of cooperation of the Union with the United Nations. An important role must be played in this respect by the meeting of presiding officers of parliaments, which is planned for the year 2000 at United Nations Headquarters in New York.

As emphasized in the report of the Secretary-General on cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union,

> "This welcome initiative is intended to be held in conjunction with and provide parliamentary support to the proposed Millennium Assembly to be convened by the United Nations in September 2000." *(A/53/458, para. 4)*

We are convinced that efforts to enhance cooperation between the United Nations and the IPU will contribute to resolving the global challenges facing humankind at the dawn of the twenty-first century and serve as an impressive example of cooperation with the United Nations for other international organizations.

Mr. Al-Hadid (Jordan) (*interpretation from Arabic*): One of the most daunting challenges that we are facing today is how to take joint action to achieve a society of peace, democracy, human rights and sustainable development. These are linked and interdependent goals. They require new thinking and new cooperation based on new ethics and new values. This means not only abandoning the mentality of the cold war but also moving from an idea of citizenship based on competition with others to global citizenship.

A starting point for this may lie in adjusting the structure of the United Nations so that it will be more democratic and more encouraging of international partnership. The United Nations has begun the process of opening itself to and cooperating with the institutions of civil society. This is a sound policy because it enhances the expansion of popular participation in the development process and, consequently, collective responsibility for this process. Thus, this policy supports the growth of democratization throughout the countries of the world and encourages constructive interchange among its civil societies.

Among the most important new tasks are the strenuous efforts to deepen democracy in theory and in practice. States should be treated in accordance with their approximation of democratic life and respect for human rights and freedoms. Such treatment should also take into account how States distance themselves from the factors creating conflicts and differences, and their construction of their existence in line with the precepts of peace and security and of a better life for their citizens. All of this is within the purview of the international system, which is based on justice, the sharing of experiences and views, and enhancing societal progress.

Only a few years separate us from the twenty-first century. We are witnessing radical transformations in many States of the world. These changes are reflected in the emergence of legislative power as a symbol of democracy and justice and in the fulfilment of its role in national and global political action. This requires looking into these experiences with the support, care, cooperation and coordination it deserves, between the United Nations and Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) which is to be regarded as the wider umbrella containing all the parliaments of the world.

In Jordan we take pride in our democratic progress, and we are striving to deepen and develop it. On this basis Jordan welcomes the opportunity to host the IPU Conference in Amman in the year 2000. Jordan supports a formula by which the United Nations, along with the world's parliaments, will interact with the will of States and peoples and achieve a fruitful partnership which will become part of the work of the new United Nations.

From this rostrum I wish to record my country's belief in and fundamental commitment to the concepts of international cooperation and of coordination with the parliaments of the world, as represented by the IPU on the one hand and the international Organization and its various institutions on the other hand. This emanates from the belief in the need to expand the concept of institutional democracy, to buttress its pillars and to have States and peoples participate in the pursuit of the attainment of security, justice and peace for all peoples of the world.

Mr. Pérez-Otermin (Uruguay) (*interpretation from Spanish*): I have the honour to address the General Assembly on agenda item 28, entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union".

Allow me first of all to indicate my country's great interest in this topic. From the very beginning Uruguay has supported the inclusion of this item for discussion both in the General Assembly and in the Inter-Parliamentary Union. Since the signing of the agreement between the Inter-Parliamentary Union and the United Nations on 24 July 1996, Uruguay has been convinced that this closer relationship between the world organization of parliaments and the world Organization of Governments facilitates the efficient conduct of mutually complementary activities and makes it possible for the two organizations to work together more closely in joint endeavours in specific areas for the benefit of humankind.

These closer ties, in my country's opinion, are in keeping with the nature and composition of the two organizations, since the one reflects the voices of political parties, which are the legitimate representatives of our citizens, and covers the broadest spectrum of representativeness, whereas in the other are heard the voices of Governments. Thus, the conjunction of the two provides for the broadest and most complete representation of the opinions of States.

My delegation appreciates the contribution made by the Secretary-General in document A/53/458 of 5 October and welcomes the progress and achievements of the two organizations in the course of the past year. These accomplishments represent a significant mutual strengthening at the institutional level and coordination on a number of important topics on the international agenda.

In this regard, we are very pleased at the proposal that the Inter-Parliamentary Union should hold a conference of speakers of national parliaments in New York concurrently with the holding of the Millennium Assembly at the United Nations, scheduled for September 2000.

As may be noted in the report submitted by the Secretary-General, there is a multitude of activities being carried out and promoted by the Inter-Parliamentary Union, activities that the United Nations should not ignore but rather highlight, recognize and support. The recent opening of the Inter-Parliamentary Union's Liaison Office with the United Nations in New York is yet another sign of the smooth dovetailing of the work of the two organizations, and it will help optimize even further their mutual relations and contribute to the defence and promotion of their major interests.

A consistent feature of Uruguay's foreign policy has been that the major principles and themes that guide its conduct externally are shared by the broad majority of the domestic political actors. The Parliament of Uruguay is resolutely committed to the objectives of the Inter-Parliamentary Union and contributes to them to the utmost of its ability. At the regional and subregional levels, parliamentary delegations from my country have followed and continue to follow very carefully the handling of the topics addressed by the Latin American Parliament, whose current presiding officer is a Uruguayan legislator.

Interest in — and belief in the need of — involving parliaments in the conduct of foreign affairs has also been a special concern of the Southern Cone Common Market (MERCOSUR), which by the Ouro Preto Protocol created a joint parliamentary commission, which provides for the representation in MERCOSUR of the parliaments of its member countries.

Those of us who are convinced that there is no better form of Government than the democratic system must accept and defend the existence of political parties as the legitimate conduits of public opinion. There can be no democracy without political parties. And if there is no democracy, there is no institutional stability, or development, or full exercise of human rights.

For all these reasons, Uruguay supports the draft resolution on cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union which is now before the General Assembly. We endorse its content and its aims, and for that reason, my country is one of the sponsors of the draft resolution.

Lastly, allow me, as a Uruguayan and as a representative of my Government to the United Nations, to take the liberty of saying that whenever we speak of the Inter-Parliamentary Union we must remember Mr. Hugo Batalla, who passed away on 3 October last, while carrying out the functions of Vice President of the Republic, a post to which he was elected at the last national elections, in November 1994.

As a parliamentarian, Mr. Batalla always represented our country in the Inter-Parliamentary Union, within which, to Uruguay's honour, he was elected to high offices, chiefly because of his tireless defence of human rights, democracy and social justice as indispensable principles of human activity.

There could be no more accurate tribute to him than the words uttered at his funeral by the President of the Republic, Mr. Julio Maria Sanguinetti:

> "A man whose heart permeated his reason, his sense of life, his attitude towards his fellow man and the spirit that guided him every day as he sallied forth with his traditional optimism and his warm smile to work, to serve and to help. He may possibly have been, in depth and in substance, the most Uruguayan of all Uruguayans."

Mr. Andjaba (Namibia): I have the honour to address the Assembly on the very important issue of cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU).

The struggle of the Namibian people was firmly based on the demand for democracy, freedom and our inalienable right to self-determination. Since independence, my Government has been very active in working towards a new society based on the principles of unity, democracy, social justice, equality, the dignity of human beings and economic and social prosperity for all Namibians. From the outset, the Namibian Government committed itself to reconciliation, democracy, nation-building and development. These principles are clearly contained in the ideals of the international community today, which embraces good governance, accountability, transparency, the rule of law and political pluralism.

Namibia had the honour of hosting the 99th Inter-Parliamentary Union Conference, held last April in Windhoek. In his opening address, the President of Namibia made the following prefatory remarks,

> "As elected representatives of the people, we must be mindful of the aspirations and hopes of our people and articulate these aspirations in a manner resulting in tangible programmes and projects which will improve the standard of living of our people. We must remain seized of the problems and challenges of fighting crime, poverty, homelessness and despair, which confront our people. We must search for solutions to these problems. We must be open to and approachable by the people who elected us to office. We must listen to their opinions and views. It is only when we remain in touch with the electorate that they will put their trust in us."

At that meeting the IPU discussed and took decisions which, as presented in the report of the Secretary-General (A/53/458), are complementary to and supportive of the work of the United Nations system. The IPU expressed its support for the work of the Secretary-General in a number of activities undertaken the world over, particularly in terms of conflict resolution. The other resolutions adopted at the IPU Conference dealt with HIV/AIDS, foreign debt and the situation in Kosovo.

Namibia welcomes the continued efforts of the IPU for the promotion of representative democracy. In this regard, we note with pleasure the working relationship which exists between the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the IPU, as illustrated by the meeting of presidents and senior parliamentary leaders from African parliaments that took place in Harare. The subject of that meeting concerned the contributions that parliaments can make to democracy in Africa and the mechanisms for strengthening inter-parliamentary cooperation on the continent.

Another reflection of a core activity of the IPU was the decision taken at the Windhoek meeting to promote representative democracy through greater partnership between women and men in society in general, and in political life in particular. In this regard, we express my country's appreciation of and support for the cooperation between the Division for the Advancement of Women, the Secretary-General's Special Adviser on Gender Issues and the IPU. It is gratifying to note the planned tripartite meeting of representatives of Governments, parliaments and international organizations on the occasion of the special session on the five-year review of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, to be held in the year 2000. Such concrete collaborations pave the way for better implementation of the outcomes of major global conferences.

We are equally encouraged by the continued support of the IPU for the universal ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the withdrawal of reservations thereto. My delegation applauds the efforts of the IPU on its emphasis on the empowerment of women, particularly for women parliamentarians.

Another milestone is the opening of the IPU Liaison Office in New York, which no doubt will greatly facilitate and assist the further development of cooperation between the United Nations and the IPU. We believe this Office will serve as a focal point for the different parliament members from around the globe visiting the United Nations and will facilitate a greater parliamentarian presence and input at United Nations meetings.

It is evident from the report provided to us that parliamentarians have a role to play in strengthening the aims and objectives of the Charter of the United Nations. Namibia wholeheartedly expresses its support for the continued strengthening of the relationship between the United Nations and the IPU.

Mr. Wehbe (Syrian Arab Republic), Vice-President, took the Chair.

At the 1997 summit meeting of the heads of State and Government of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), held in Malawi, the SADC Parliamentary Forum was established as an integral but autonomous body within the SADC structure. This subregional parliamentary association is committed to the enhancement of justice, democracy, the rule of law, development and good governance within the SADC region. The Namibian Speaker of Parliament is the Chairperson of that body.

Parliaments are necessary, but not sufficient edifices of power and legitimacy in themselves. Parliaments, where they exist, require an all-round back-up system consisting of, among other things, internal peace and social harmony, regular elections, multi-party politics, effective administration of justice, economic productivity and, above all, an informed and active public.

Finally, I wish to reiterate our full support for the cooperation between the United Nations and the IPU and hope that the draft resolution before us today will be adopted without a vote.

Mr. Salamanca (Bolivia) (*interpretation from Spanish*): On behalf of the delegation of Bolivia and on my own behalf, I wish to begin by thanking the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, for submitting the report contained in document A/53/458 of 5 October, in which he gives a detailed account of the cooperation activities between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union.

I also wish to place on record my delegation's appreciation to Mr. Miguel Angel Martínez and Mr. Anders B.Johnsson, the highest officials of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, for having opened, in March 1998, the Liaison Office of the Inter-Parliamentary Union at United Nations Headquarters in New York, an event which will undoubtedly strengthen the relationship between the two institutions.

In the same vein, I wish to convey our thanks and appreciation to the Permanent Mission of Spain to the United Nations, and in particular to Ambassador Inocencio Arias for introducing the draft resolution contained in document A/53/L.12 on the item of cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union.

Since its inception in 1889, the Inter-Parliamentary Union has been the most important permanent forum for multilateral dialogue, promoting peace and international arbitration. In its time, it contributed to creating the League of Nations, the United Nations and the Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague.

Its relevance and dedication to the work of supporting and cooperating to realize the purposes and principles of the United Nations, regional inter-parliamentary, international, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations working throughout the world for peace, democracy, cooperation among peoples and many other issues of world concern, make coordination with the United Nations of crucial importance.

My country, Bolivia, which is striving to consolidate its democracy, belongs to four parliamentary groupings within the Inter-Parliamentary Union: the Latin American Parliament, the Andean Parliament, the Amazonian Parliament and the Indigenous Parliament. This demonstrates our democratic, multicultural and multi-ethnic tradition.

Draft resolution A/53/L.12, which my country is honoured to sponsor, enthusiastically supports the proposed convening of a conference of presiding officers of national parliaments at United Nations Headquarters in 2000, on the occasion of the Millennium Assembly. This proposal was first put forward at the ninety-ninth Conference of the Inter-Parliamentary Council, held in Windhoek, Namibia, in April this year, when the Council also addressed the subjects of the external debt of the third world and the situation in Kosovo.

At the same time, we wish to highlight the resolution adopted at the Conference held in Moscow in September on the promotion and protection of all human rights in the twenty-first century.

In conclusion, echoing the remarks of the Permanent Representative of Spain, Mr. Arias, I would propose that the draft resolution contained in document A/53/L.12 be adopted by acclamation.

Mr. Macedo (Mexico) (*interpretation from Spanish*): My delegation welcomes the fact that, again this year, a meeting of parliamentarians has been held in the context of the regular session of the General Assembly. The contribution of legislators to our work is unquestionably very valuable, for they are the spokespersons of the most wide-ranging and pluralistic aspirations and interests of the peoples of the United Nations.

In the domestic context, the Government of Mexico attaches particular importance to the strengthening of links between the executive and legislative branches as a crucial factor in democratic life. It believes that this same principle should apply in international relations. Strengthening the bonds between the international reach of the legislative branches of a hundred-odd countries and the United Nations enhances the democratic significance of our Organization. That is why, year after year, Mexico has co-sponsored the draft resolution on cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union, an institution which reflects the international interests of our legislators and which, as the representative of Chile noted, was founded even earlier than the United Nations. We agree with Ambassador Somavía's statement that the Inter-Parliamentary Union cannot be seen as just another non-governmental organization. It deserves special treatment, which we should seek to accord it.

The cooperation agreement signed between the two institutions in 1996 sets the legal framework for the activities in which the Inter-Parliamentary Union supports United Nations initiatives. In this regard, cooperation between the two organizations has generated momentum that should be pursued in many areas indicated in the Secretary-General's report and the draft resolution contained in document A/53/L.12 before us. We hope that the General Assembly will be able to adopt the draft resolution without a vote.

Ms. Ríos-Montt (Guatemala) (*interpretation from Spanish*): It is an honour for me, on behalf of the delegation of Guatemala, to take part in the discussion on cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union with a view to strengthening that relationship, mainly because, although the United Nations works closely with the executive bodies, our parliaments are very important.

It is true that from a functional point of view parliaments are generally multifaceted organizations. The variety of their functions is explained by their distinctive role, which makes them political instruments of the principle of popular sovereignty. Proceeding from that concept, parliaments have the right and the duty to intervene in various ways in all the stages of the political process. Their activities therefore include those of stimulation and legislative initiatives, discussion and deliberation, inquiry and control and support and legitimization. Such activities are, of course, included in the basic functions of representation, legislation and providing a balance to the executive branch.

Parliaments therefore play a substantial role in political life, as their members are the trustees of power and the legitimate representatives of the people. Whether the relationship between a Government and a parliament is characterized by division of labour, cooperation or moderate or strong opposition, parliaments are and should be institutions that are fundamental and indispensable for democracy. That is why a cooperation agreement between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union is necessary.

This is a foundation and a platform for beginning the process and then to continue with other types of mechanisms, such as the proposed conference of speakers of national parliaments in the year 2000, and thus to understand that parliaments must not be confined to secondary roles. There should be no more merely decorative roles, no more parliaments that do public relations for the party in power. Our institutions are made up of men and women who want to ensure respect for human rights, equality, justice and peace, and we come together in the Inter-Parliamentary Union.

That is why Guatemala hopes that draft resolution A/53/L.12 will be adopted unanimously.

Mr. Bocalandro (Argentina) (*interpretation from Spanish*): It is an honour for me to address the General Assembly at this plenary meeting on the draft resolution on cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union and to lend my country's support by joining with the other sponsors.

In that context, I should like to convey the gratitude of my delegation to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and to the President of the Inter-Parliamentary Council, Mr. Miguel Angel Martínez, for their efforts to strengthen and intensify the bonds between the two organizations. We were pleased with the report of the Secretary-General, which summarizes the recent activities carried out by the Inter-Parliamentary Union to promote peace and security, representative democracy and sustainable socio-economic development.

Furthermore, the degree of representativeness and the profound democratic tradition that guides that organization are well known, and we are pleased that outstanding Argentine legislators take an active part in its work. We are also heartened to know that the United Nations receives increasing support from the Union in the area of providing parliamentarians with technical assistance and advisory services.

We believe that the Union's activities in this regard, and its cooperation with the United Nations, should be encouraged, because the Union includes representatives of most societies, and its opinions are of great significance for the decisions that the United Nations is called upon to take.

The signing of the agreement between the two organizations on 24 July 1996 made it possible to lay the foundation for institutional support for the cooperation established so as to heighten the democratic awareness of States and to reinforce parliamentarianism and representative democracy.

The draft resolution before us gives fresh impetus to that cooperation, and helps bolster and deepen the process of cooperation that has already been consolidated, opening new and interesting prospects for cooperation between the Inter-Parliamentary Union and the United Nations.

The draft resolution highlights the fact that, with the aim of providing parliamentary support to United Nations activities, the Union has decided to hold a conference of parliamentarians in the year 2000, which will take place at the same time as the session of the General Assembly commemorating the millennium. We believe that this initiative should be welcomed, and we firmly support it. That occasion will be a unique event to which the presence of parliamentarians will lend particular relevance.

For all those reasons, the Argentine Republic is co-sponsoring the draft resolution, as it has done in previous cases, in the conviction that we will thereby be contributing to the development of the ideals sought by the international community.

Mr. Suh Dae-won (Republic of Korea): Over the past decade, the world has witnessed the planting and the growth of democracy in many countries which had previously suffered under the weight of authoritarian and oppressive regimes. Not only has democracy broken free in many nations, but where the framework of democratic principles and institutions existed, we have seen real democracy develop. The worldwide call for democracy has penetrated almost every nation, as we see the populations of the world clamour for representative Governments.

Last February, the Republic of Korea inaugurated the Government of President Kim Dae-jung. For the first time in Korea's 50-year constitutional history, the Korean people demonstrated their aspiration for real democracy by voting for the opposition party to accede to power. Since then, President Kim has made every effort to foster democracy and a market economy in parallel with each other in the belief that democracy is the natural partner of real development.

The international community's desire for building democratic processes and institutions is embodied in the principles of the United Nations. The Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), created in 1889, was at the forefront in the quest for a democratic world. It is only fitting that these two international bodies have joined their efforts to bring about peace and security through democratic ideals.

The close cooperation between the United Nations and the IPU can only better serve the purpose of a peaceful and democratic world. The IPU, over the decades, has served as a tireless advocate of democratic principles and has striven for the peaceful settlement of international disputes. So, too, has this been the mandate of the United Nations. Through cooperation and the pooling of their strength these two international bodies can bring their vast experience and expertise to the task of promoting the globalization of democracy.

Since the United Nations and the IPU signed an agreement of cooperation, in 1996, they have supported and assisted each other in the areas of peace and security, democracy, human rights and sustainable development. The Secretary-General's report has been most comprehensive and informative in describing the coordinated efforts made by the IPU and the United Nations system. The delegation of the Republic of Korea is very pleased to note that this cooperation has been strengthened and facilitated by the opening of the IPU Liaison Office with the United Nations in New York in March 1998.

We have noted the support extended by the IPU to United Nations efforts for the prevention of conflicts and the restoration of peace in war-torn countries. In turn, we commend the IPU's sustained contribution to building democracy and providing technical assistance to the United Nations at national levels, as well as its close working relationship with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in promoting good governance. In this regard, I should like to commend yesterday's signing of arrangements for a multi-year parliamentary support programme between UNDP and the IPU. I am convinced that the arrangement will further expand the scope of cooperation between the IPU and the United Nations.

As this year marks the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, we find it rewarding that the IPU and the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights have also chosen to establish close cooperation. They have both steadfastly endeavoured to encourage stronger involvement of parliaments throughout the world in the promotion and protection of human rights, producing tangible results at the national level and influencing international relations.

The 163rd session of the Inter-Parliamentary Council, held in Moscow in September, proved to be a remarkable success. We are pleased to note that the IPU now comprises 137 member parliaments and four international parliamentary associations, attesting to its universal scope.

As a continuation of the cooperation efforts of the United Nations system and the IPU, we welcome the initiative of the 163rd session of the Inter-Parliamentary Council to convene a conference of presiding officers of national parliaments at the United Nations in the year 2000, in conjunction with the Millennium Assembly.

As the twenty-first century approaches, we are still faced with various challenges, such as the threat of nuclear annihilation, regional conflicts, poverty, abuses of human rights, drug-trafficking and so on. Moreover, we are assessing the policy of globalization, which has been underpinning the rapid economic growth of Asian economies. In particular, the role of globalization has come under close scrutiny in the various regions of the world in relation to the recent financial crisis.

My delegation hopes that the conference of presiding officers of national parliaments will make substantial contributions in meeting those challenges in the twenty-first century, in tandem with the United Nations.

The Republic of Korea, in the belief that the United Nations and the IPU have a joint mission to make prosperity, peace and democracy universal in the next century, joins in the sponsorship of the draft resolution entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union". My delegation is grateful to Ambassador Inocencio Arias, Permanent Representative of Spain, for his introduction of the draft resolution before us, and we earnestly hope that it will be adopted by consensus.

Mr. Abelian (Armenia): It gives me a great pleasure to address the General Assembly on the subject of cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU).

I should like to take this opportunity to commend the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report outlining the deepening and consolidation of cooperation between the IPU and the United Nations.

Armenia highly values the role of parliamentarians in promoting pluralistic democracy. We are convinced that national parliamentarians, by working together at the international level, have a major role to play in helping realize the goals of the United Nations. We strongly believe that the ideals of democracy that parliaments embody should inspire and govern relations not only within, but also between, States.

In this respect, we attach great importance to the cooperation between the United Nations and the IPU, being convinced that the development of this cooperation will bring to the United Nations the diverse will of "We the peoples".

The increasing, active participation of parliamentarians in international affairs is constantly gaining strength, lending new impetus to the participation of civil society in international activities.

The possibilities of cooperation between the United Nations and the IPU are enormous, especially in the fields of economic and social development, peace and security, international law, human rights, gender issues and governance.

The importance of conflict prevention for global peace is now a universally recognized fact. In this respect we welcome the resolution on the prevention of conflicts and restoration of peace in war-torn countries, adopted at the IPU Conference in Windhoek last April. Given that parliamentarians are called on to express the will and voice of the people, it is extremely important that they take part in the promotion of global peace and security. This is becoming a reality of today's world.

In this respect, it is with deep regret that two days ago we received news of the cancellation of the meeting between the Speakers of the Parliaments and Foreign Ministers of Armenia and Azerbaijan and representatives of the leadership of Nagorny Karabakh. The meeting, which was scheduled to be held in Strasbourg under the auspices of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, has been cancelled because of the inability of the Azerbaijani authorities to respect previously assumed commitments. The Azerbaijani side had objected to the participation of Nagorny Karabakh in the Strasbourg consultations, but eventually gave its consent to the formal hearings approved at a meeting of the Political Committee of the Parliamentary Assembly, held in Ljubljana on 3 September 1998.

Being a strong advocate of the peaceful settlement of the Nagorny Karabakh conflict, Armenia is convinced that its ultimate resolution can be achieved only through direct negotiations between the two conflicting parties — Nagorny Karabakh and Azerbaijan. In this context, it is greatly discouraging to see the Azerbaijani parliamentarians decline this opportunity for direct talks, especially at the level of people's representatives.

This year marks the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. In view of this, the resolution adopted by consensus by the 100th Inter-Parliamentary Conference, in Moscow last September, on the "Strong Action by national parliaments in the year of the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights to ensure the promotion and protection of all human rights in the twenty-first century", is of particular relevance.

I should like to stress the importance of adding a parliamentarian dimension to the tasks carried out by the United Nations. I am convinced that the conference of speakers of national parliaments, to be held in 2000, will provide parliamentarian support to the Millennium Assembly and give its participants an opportunity to express their views on how national parliaments and their world organization can work together with the United Nations in the new millennium in efforts to create a better and more prosperous world in the light of the current reform process of the United Nations.

Allow me to conclude by expressing the hope of my delegation that draft resolution A/53/L.12, which is sponsored by a large number of Member States, including Armenia, will be adopted by consensus, as have draft resolutions on this subject in previous years.

The meeting rose at 1.15 p.m.

United Nations

A/53/PV.47

General Assembly

Fifty-third Session

47th plenary meeting

Wednesday, 28 October 1998, 3 p.m.
New York

Official Records

President: Mr. Opertti .... (Uruguay)

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda item 28 *(continued)*

Cooperation between the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union

Report of the Secretary-General (A/53/458)

Draft resolution (A/53/L.12)

The President (*interpretation from Spanish*): We shall now proceed to consider draft resolution A/53/L.12.

Before proceeding to take action on the draft resolution, I have the pleasure of announcing that, since the draft was introduced, the following countries have joined the list of its co-sponsors: Belarus, Côte d'Ivoire, Israel, Mali, Rwanda, Seychelles, Sri Lanka, Suriname and Uganda.

The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/53/L.12.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution [illegible].12?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 53/13).

The President (*interpretation from Spanish*): In closing our debate on the item under consideration, the presidency would like to comment on an element that it deems vital to the strengthening of the ties that link the parliaments of the States Members of the Organization, the organization of those parliaments — the Inter-Parliamentary Union — and the United Nations system itself.

Clearly, the ideals of cooperation and dialogue that led to the creation of the Inter-Parliamentary Union over 100 years ago are today more important than ever. As a number of delegations have stressed, the parliaments of the world — composed of men and women elected by the people — represent a source and a focal point for the necessary support that the United Nations ideals of peace, democracy and development must receive from all of its Members.

The conference of speakers of national parliaments proposed for the year 2000, to be held in conjunction with the Millennium Assembly at the United Nations, will no doubt be an ideal and very welcome opportunity further to strengthen this cooperation, which has been fuelled and will continue to be fuelled by timely actions and resolutions such as the one we have adopted today, with the support of all States present.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 28?

It was so decided.

This record contains the original text of speeches delivered in English and interpretations of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to original speeches only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned, *within one month of the date of the meeting*, to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, Room C-178. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

Agenda item 50

Report of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Genocide and Other Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of Rwanda and Rwandan Citizens Responsible for Genocide and Other Such Violations Committed in the Territory of Neighbouring States between 1 January and 31 December 1994

Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the third annual report of the International Criminal Tribunal (A/53/429)

The President (*interpretation from Spanish*): May I take it that the Assembly takes note of the third annual report of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda?

It was so decided.

The President (*interpretation from Spanish*): I call on Mr. Laity Kama, President of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda.

Mr. Kama, President of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (*interpretation from French*): I am grateful for the opportunity to appear before the Assembly once again to report on the activities of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda during the past year. The third annual report, which I have the honour to submit to the Assembly, details the Tribunal's activities since July 1997. It is the last report of the judges' first term of office, which expires at the end of May 1999.

In my statement this afternoon, I will refrain from discussing at length the written report before the Assembly. I would particularly like, however — after a brief description of the Tribunal's main judicial activities — to draw the Assembly's attention to certain especially important matters directly related to the Tribunal's functioning. These matters pertain to the places of imprisonment of convicted persons and to security.

The Tribunal was formally established by the Security Council on 8 November 1994. It is charged with prosecuting persons presumed responsible for acts of genocide and other serious violations of international humanitarian law committed in the territory of Rwanda in 1994, in order to put an end to impunity and to promote national reconciliation.

In fulfilling the mandate entrusted to them, the judges have consistently endeavoured to render fair and expeditious justice, in accordance with article 19 of the Statute of the Tribunal. However, over and above the well-known administrative difficulties it had to face at the outset, the Tribunal has also been confronted with logistical problems in organizing trials, such as having only one courtroom for the two Trial Chambers and the imperative need to ensure the protection of witnesses at all stages of trial proceedings. All this somewhat slowed the work of the Tribunal during the first two years of its existence. In that context, 1998 most certainly marks a very positive change and, I believe, the beginning of a new era for the Tribunal.

Since the submission of the Tribunal's second annual report, judicial activities have increased considerably. The much awaited first judgement of the Tribunal was delivered on 2 September 1998. It concerns the case of *The Prosecutor v. Jean-Paul Akayesu*. It was closely followed on 4 September by the judgement and sentencing of Jean Kambanda, who was Prime Minister of the Interim Government of Rwanda in 1994.

Regarding the judgement delivered on 2 September, the Trial Chamber found Akayesu guilty on 9 counts out of 15, including genocide, direct and public incitement to commit genocide and crimes against humanity. Commentators lauded this judgement as crucial for the development of international criminal justice, not only because it was the first judgement handed down by the Tribunal for Rwanda, but also because it was the very first delivered by an international court in regard to the crime of genocide. In this judgement — a voluminous document of nearly 300 pages, delivered simultaneously in the two working languages of the Tribunal — the Trial Chamber ruled on certain matters of law that had never before been brought before an international court. It thus reviewed the law applicable to each of the crimes falling within its jurisdiction — that is, the crimes of genocide, complicity in genocide, direct and public incitement to commit genocide, and violations of article 3 common to the Geneva Conventions and of Additional Protocol II thereto. In so doing, the Chamber defined some of the constituent crimes of the offences falling within its jurisdiction, particularly rape, since there was no commonly accepted definition of this term in international law.

The Akayesu judgement brought to a close a trial that had lasted more than a year. During the trial, the Trial Chamber heard 42 witnesses called by the parties —

testimony which generated more than 4,000 pages of transcripts. The Chamber also considered 125 exhibits entered in evidence. After holding a pre-sentencing hearing in the Jean-Paul Akayesu case, on 2 October the Trial Chamber sentenced him to life imprisonment.

The other major event was the sentencing, on 4 September 1998, in the case *The Prosecutor v. Jean Kambanda*. The Trial Chamber, which had previously found the former Prime Minister of Rwanda guilty, sentenced him to life imprisonment, after verifying the conditions under which he had pleaded guilty. A number of commentators also viewed this judgement as historic, on the one hand because of the position of authority held by the accused, and on the other hand because a plea of guilty by a person accused of genocide before an international criminal court was without precedent.

It should be underscored, however, that the guilty verdict and sentence against Akayesu and the life sentence imposed on Kambanda are not final since the convicted have lodged appeals. It is therefore up to the Appeals Chamber to make the final judgement.

In addition to the above, two other trials are under way. One case, *The Prosecutor v. Clément Kayishema and Obed Ruzindana*, will soon enter the deliberations phase, the Trial Chamber having started last week to hear the closing arguments of the Prosecutor, which will be followed by those of the defence. The other case, *The Prosecutor v. Georges Rutaganda*, has been delayed due to the health problems of the accused and of his counsel. As a result, the Trial Chamber concerned has had to adjourn the proceedings several times. Hearings will resume as soon as possible.

Despite these tangible achievements, the judges are aware that much remains to be done, if only because, for instance, 31 accused persons have been arrested by various States and handed over to the Tribunal to be held in custody at its detention facility in Arusha. To this number should be added another accused who was recently arrested in Namibia and has since been transferred to Arusha. Clearly, those still awaiting trial should be tried as soon as possible in order to comply with their fundamental right to be tried within a reasonable amount of time.

In this regard, the judges wish to express their satisfaction with the efforts made by the Prosecutor to arrest accused or suspected persons. Indeed, principally under the aegis of the new Deputy Prosecutor, several arrests were made, notably in the course of an operation carried out in cooperation with the Kenyan authorities in July 1997. I reported to the Assembly on this last year. This operation resulted in the arrest of persons considered to have held positions of authority in Rwanda in 1994, including an ex-minister who is the first woman to be indicted by an international criminal court. In June of this year, another operation in various West African countries resulted in the arrest and transfer to the Tribunal of six more persons.

I would like to welcome the cooperation extended by various countries involved in the two operations — Kenya, Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Mali and Togo. More generally, we should like to thank all those countries that have supported us in our efforts to secure justice by giving a positive response to our requests for cooperation and assistance, whether by the judges or the Prosecutor.

However, the presence of all these detainees at the Tribunal's detention facility and the need to try them as soon as possible have made the organization of the judicial calendar all the more difficult. Another consequence of the increase in arrested indictees and the significant increase in the number of motions resulting from this increase was that the Tribunal soon found itself overloaded, and the two Trial Chambers were not sufficient to handle all the cases involved. Hence, the Security Council — at our request and after noting the progress achieved by the Tribunal — decided, by its resolution 1165 (1998) of 30 April 1998, to establish a third Trial Chamber. Thus the Council took due account of the difficulties faced by the judges in the fulfilment of their mandate, which had been rendered more complicated, as I have said, by the combined effect of a steadily increasing number of detainees and the imperative to respect certain standards and principles governing the administration of justice. In its resolution, the Security Council urged the organs of the Tribunal to continue their efforts to increase further the efficiency of the Tribunal's work and to consider how to enhance their work procedures in order to speed up the proceedings.

First, on improving in the way the Tribunal functions, it falls to the Registrar to rationalize administrative procedures in the pursuit of greater efficiency. Although the judges are satisfied that considerable efforts have been made to improve the administrative and logistical support given to the Trial Chambers and the Prosecutor, it must be said that several problems do remain, to which solutions must be found as rapidly as possible. Among the most urgent is the need to computerize the judicial archives, thus greatly facilitating their use, and the need to increase the number of legal advisers assisting the Chambers. In this connection, we hope that the provisions contained in the draft budget before you pertaining to the creation of several posts for legal officers at various levels will be approved. Moreover, it is essential that the third courtroom be finished as soon as possible so that the new judges can begin hearings as soon as they arrive in Arusha.

With regard to procedural reforms intended to accelerate proceedings, the judges amended certain provisions of the Rules of Procedure and Evidence at the fifth plenary session of the Tribunal for Rwanda, held in Arusha from 1 to 5 June 1998. Among the numerous amendments adopted, special mention could be made of those relating to the modalities of pre-trial preparation, which should help speed up disclosure procedures between the parties as to the number and order of appearance of witnesses for the prosecution and the defence. The judges also sanctioned a procedure well known in civil law whereby the Trial Chamber pronounces both judgement as to guilt and the sentence at the same time, if need be, instead of in two different stages, as had been the case up to now.

The Prosecutor had considered that another way of expediting proceedings would be to join several cases. Initially, however, instead of filing motions for joinder, as she had appeared resolved to do, the Prosecutor preferred to present a new indictment citing 29 persons, some of whom had already been indicted and had made their initial appearances, and for some of whom the trial date had even been set. The judge to whom the indictment was submitted rejected it because of flawed procedure, and the prosecution's subsequent appeal was declared inadmissible by the Appeals Chamber. Thereupon, the Prosecutor finally chose to file, in due form, several motions for joinder that the Trial Chambers were prepared to hear. But the defence then objected to the composition of the Chambers set up for that purpose and appealed the decision taken to maintain it as it was. And so, consideration of the motions for joinder is suspended until the Appeals Chamber decision is known.

On this issue, I would stress that in spite of the fact that certain motions were not dealt with as diligently as the judges of the Trial Chambers would have liked, the latter to date have handed down more than 150 decisions in regard to indictment procedures and witness protection measures or preliminary motions. This testifies to the efforts made by the judges, with the assistance of the legal officers of the Chambers and the support of the judicial Registry in general.

That having been said, I should like now to broach the two crucial questions that I referred to earlier — namely, the place of imprisonment and the security of the Tribunal and all who work there, including the judges.

The reason I wish to discuss with you the problem of the place of imprisonment is because two persons have already been sentenced by the Tribunal to terms of imprisonment, and if the Appeals Chamber upholds the sentences, the problem of knowing in which country the terms will be served is acute. Article 26 of the Statute states:

> "Imprisonment shall be served in Rwanda or any of the States on a list of States which have indicated to the Security Council their willingness to accept convicted persons, as designated by the International Tribunal for Rwanda. Such imprisonment shall be in accordance with the applicable law of the State concerned, subject to the supervision of the International Tribunal for Rwanda."

This means that the Tribunal needs the cooperation of States, which is all the more urgent in this area because, as I told you last year when I presented the second annual report, to date only six States, as well as Rwanda, have informed the Security Council of their intention to receive, sometimes under certain conditions, convicted persons in their national prisons. Those States are: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Norway, Sweden and Switzerland. I wish to thank those States most particularly and to say how honoured we are by their support.

Despite our efforts, those of the United Nations Secretary-General and of the Secretary-General of the Organization of African Unity, so far no African country has declared its readiness to receive the persons convicted by the Tribunal. Now, you will understand that for various reasons, pertaining as much to cultural factors as to their families' proximity, it might be desirable that certain convicted persons at least serve their sentences in African prisons.

We believe that the reticence of many African States is due to the financial difficulties involved, as the convicted persons must serve their sentences in facilities meeting international standards. Hence, I am appealing to you to transmit to the Governments you represent our request for cooperation, in order that they might consider receiving convicted persons in their prisons and that consideration be given to the possibilities of cooperation in the financing of such operations.

The other particularly pressing problem on which I wish to comment is that of security. Security means first of all the security of witnesses who agree to testify before us in Arusha, often at risk of their lives. In this connection, it is necessary that witness protection services be strengthened and, above all, that they have at their disposal the best guarantees of security. The pertinence of the question as to what guarantee of security can be given in Arusha is greater than ever. We are not questioning the support given by Tanzania, which hosts the Tribunal and does its utmost to ensure the best possible working conditions. In this regard, I have already had the opportunity to express our gratitude personally to the President of the United Republic of Tanzania, Mr. Benjamin Mkapa, who has always assured us of his support.

However, the two sentences handed down recently give new acuity to the urgent security issue. The judges and the Registrar are in contact with the host country authorities to try to strengthen security at the Tribunal in view of the new situation.

With these few words, I have desired to draw your attention to the substantial progress achieved by the Tribunal, but also to some of the difficulties encountered, including security, which I feel are sufficiently serious for appropriate solutions to be found as rapidly as possible.

In concluding, allow me, on behalf of the six Trial Chamber judges, to express to you our sincere gratitude for the honour of having been elected in May 1995 to our positions as judges of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda. As we approach the end of our term of office, on behalf of us all, Honourable Judges Lennart Aspegren of Sweden, Tafazzal Hossein Khan of Bangladesh, Yacov Ostrovsky of the Russian Federation, Navanethem Pillay of South Africa, William Hussein Sekule of Tanzania and myself, I must tell you that the mission you assigned to us was a challenge every day of the four years of our term of office. Fully aware of the importance of this mission, we have endeavoured to establish a concept of international criminal justice that meets the expectations of the victims of the severest of crimes — genocide and crimes against humanity — while also satisfying the requirement for scrupulous respect for equitable justice.

We know that the accomplishment to which we have contributed is far from perfect. The concept of international criminal justice which has been given expression in Arusha and in The Hague, opening the way for the Rome Conference, is the work of pioneers. As such, it is essential that it receive the political support it needs in order to flourish.

History will probably remember the twentieth century not only because it saw the most barbaric acts, but also because it witnessed the affirmation of the fundamental principles of human rights and of international humanitarian law. Through our combined efforts, the twenty-first century could well be that of the effective implementation of these principles through the systematic penal repression of any violations thereof.

Mr. Mtango (United Republic of Tanzania): Please allow me at the outset to acknowledge with great appreciation the excellent introduction of the third report of the Tribunal for Rwanda that Judge Laïty Kama, the President of the Tribunal, has just made to this Assembly.

As the country privileged to host the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, my delegation welcomes with particular pleasure the third annual report of the Tribunal for Rwanda, contained in document A/53/429. We are especially delighted to note that many of the serious difficulties which earlier worked to constrain the effectiveness and efficiency of the Tribunal are increasingly being eliminated.

It is not possible to commend all those who, in one way or another, have made positive contributions to the fulfilment of the mandate of the Tribunal. These include Governments, international organizations, civil society and individuals. Special mention, however, needs to be made of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Kofi Annan, whose personal interest in the success of the Tribunal has been critical; the President and the judges of the Tribunal; the Prosecutor; the Registrar; and their staff, whose unity of purpose and commitment to the task at hand have truly made a difference.

The current report is also a source of special encouragement, containing as it does the report on the first judgement ever handed down by an international tribunal on the crime of genocide. We are also impressed by the fact that, since the report was issued, there has been yet a second judgement in that regard.

These judgements by the Tribunal are undoubtedly of historical significance. They are a pivotal landmark in the history of international criminal law, as they underscore our common resolve to ensure that genocide and crimes against humanity will not go unpunished. The reach of their significance is also of particular importance to the people, not only of Rwanda, but of the Great Lakes region as a whole and, indeed, elsewhere where conflicts have horrifically eroded the value placed on human life.

It is in this regard that we must commend the prosecutions, which, in our view, were not only fair to the defendants, but also called for vigorous sentences clearly meant to put an end to impunity and thereby to promote national reconciliation and the restoration of peace in Rwanda. Indeed, we owe it to the people of Rwanda not to fail in the delivery of justice as we failed in preventing the genocide and carnage which took place in 1994.

Since it is clear that the workload of the Tribunal has been heavy, it is appropriate that we should welcome the decision to establish a third Trial Chamber. We believe that this will lighten the existing burden and expedite the process. Indeed, the increasing number of detainees whom the Tribunal is now holding is welcome proof of the growing support of Governments, which have responded to the Tribunal's request for the surrender of suspects. As we welcome this development and commend those who have facilitated such cooperation with the Tribunal, we must continue to appeal for increased support in surrendering to the Tribunal the suspects it seeks.

My delegation is under no illusion about the challenges facing the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda. The report on agenda item 50 correctly notes that there remain some difficulties requiring solution. Even with widespread moral support for the Tribunal, much will depend on the practical assistance we, as members of the international community, extend to the court.

The basic outlines are clear. The Chambers remain without sufficient technical resources, despite their heavy workload. The Office of the Prosecutor continues to require the cooperation of the international community, while the Registry also continues to face resource constraints undermining its ability to optimize its administrative service to the Chambers and the Procuracy. These need to be addressed as a matter of priority.

As the Tribunal continues to face these challenges, which require the support of this Organization and, indeed, of the international community, we note with encouragement that the new Registrar has improved the efficiency and effectiveness of the Tribunal's operations and that the Office of Internal Oversight Services of the United Nations was able to conclude in its follow-up report that substantial improvements have taken place in almost all sectors of the Tribunal's operations.

Admittedly, the Tribunal in Arusha has been working in challenging circumstances, some of which we have just heard about from its President. It has, however, made commendable progress. Regrettably, what has attracted more attention — particularly of the media — has been the difficulties it has had to confront, rather than what it has achieved. It is our hope that the recent successes will be a turning point in this regard. The Government of Tanzania remains strongly committed in its support of the Tribunal and we shall continue, in partnership with its leadership, to strive to ensure that all the necessary facilities conducive to its smooth functioning are placed at its disposal. My Government reiterates its pledge to cooperate and stands willing to discuss and resolve any difficulties facing the Tribunal.

We were gratified by the visit paid to the Tribunal by the Secretary-General earlier this year. In welcoming him to our country, we reiterated our firm belief that, just as we have to play our part, the international community must also lend its support to the Tribunal in order to enable it to discharge its mandate and assist, as it should, in the healing process in Rwanda. We continue to make the same appeal to this Assembly.

In conclusion, I wish to point out that in spite of the recent proud achievements of the Tribunal, further progress may be slowed unless we all demonstrate our firm support by availing the court of the resources it needs, transmitting to it the information it seeks and delivering the people it indicts. Above all, this challenge is ours. We must resolve not to let the court down.

Mr. Ka (Senegal) (*interpretation from French*): Judge Laïty Kama, President of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, presented to us with great competence and analytical clarity the third annual report of the Tribunal charged with the task of trying persons accused of genocide and other serious violations of international humanitarian law committed in the territory of Rwanda or in the territory of neighbouring States between 1 January and 31 December 1994.

The mandate of the Tribunal, the scope of which makes it an agenda in itself, seems at first sight to consist of a series of challenges that are difficult to tackle.

In 1994 the international community, badly shaken by the atrocities and horrors of the tragedy in Rwanda, expressed global censure, a sense of distress and the will to do everything possible in the future to prevent such reprehensible and barbaric acts and to put an end to the reign of impunity. The members of the Tribunal for Rwanda, like their colleagues from the Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, can be considered true pioneers in the complex, delicate and sensitive field of respect for law and human dignity and the exercise of justice and equity in the context of international law.

The report under consideration today bears witness to the fact that, despite working conditions that are often difficult, the members of the Tribunal for Rwanda have been able, with courage and devotion, to apply international justice effectively and credibly.

Since its establishment, the Tribunal has confirmed indictments against 43 people, 31 of whom were apprehended and held in a detention facility in Arusha. The guilty plea of one of the most renowned of the detainees, Mr. Jean Kambanda, transitional Prime Minister during the time of the Rwandan tragedy, enabled the Tribunal and the international community to achieve a major breakthrough in the establishment of a reliable international judicial system that rejects the inevitability of impunity for acts of genocide or other serious violations of human rights.

That admission of guilt, as well as the trial that followed, have assumed historic significance, because they conferred upon the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda a very enviable position as the first international legal body to deal specifically with matters relating to the crime of genocide.

Mr. Mra (Myanmar), Vice-President, took the Chair.

That achievement was made possible by international cooperation and, in particular, by the unswerving commitment and exemplary support of the African countries in the genuinely difficult but inspiring discharge of the mandate entrusted to the Tribunal.

The Security Council and the Secretariat of the United Nations have each made a significant contribution to the attainment of that objective. It is hardly necessary to repeat that the judges of the Tribunal, working in often difficult conditions, have, with great courage, determination and dedication, accomplished a truly impressive task that has been hailed by the entire international community.

As we are about to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, in a year that has witnessed the creation of the International Criminal Court, we must all recognize that the Tribunal for Rwanda has carried out useful jurisprudential work that, above all, will make it possible to put an end to the culture of impunity.

Despite these encouraging achievements, we must bear in mind that the impressive work of the Tribunal is far from finished. Many challenges remain, and the international community must work together with the Tribunal to meet them.

My country believes that the excellent work that has been accomplished deserves to be continued and supported. The international community is therefore called upon to act. More than ever, it must continue to support and effectively contribute to the operation of the Tribunal and the noble mission of the judges, who are successfully, skilfully and very courageously discharging their mandate.

Mr. Kolby (Norway): Norway welcomes the first ever judgements on the crime of genocide by an international court, 50 years after the adoption of the genocide Convention. It fell to the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda to deliver those ground-breaking decisions in September this year. Those precedent-setting cases provide the legal confirmation that genocide actually occurred in Rwanda in 1994, and they shed extensive light on the chain of events linked thereto. Moreover, they represent important new building blocks in international jurisprudence with regard to the prosecution of the most serious international crimes. The experience obtained by the Rwanda Tribunal is also a stepping stone towards the establishment of the International Criminal Court, in accordance with the Rome Statute adopted in July this year. After a difficult start, the Rwanda Tribunal is now up and running and we, like so many others, hope that its activity will contribute to the long-term process of national reconciliation in Rwanda.

We have previously expressed concern about the administrative difficulties with which the Tribunal has been confronted, and we have followed with great attention efforts to improve working conditions in Arusha and Kigali. After a careful reading of the report before us, and on the basis of the study made by the Office of Internal Oversight Services, we recognize that significant progress has been made. Even though improvements still need to be made, we feel encouraged by the steps that have already been taken and the results so far achieved.

Among the noteworthy improvements made, we note the measures taken this summer in order to speed up cases before the Tribunal. We are confident that these steps will contribute to an effective handling of cases without reducing in any way the procedural rights of the accused or of any other parties to the process.

Norway remains a strong supporter of the Tribunal and joins those that have appealed to States to take all legislative steps necessary in order to ensure effective State cooperation with the Tribunal. In addition to legislation and compliance with the Tribunal's requests for assistance, concrete support for the Tribunal should be shown through financial and material support. The Norwegian Government has, among its measures, declared its willingness to consider applications from the Tribunal concerning the enforcement of sentences from the Tribunal and, subsequently, in conformity with our national law, receive a limited number of convicted persons to serve their terms in Norway.

Mr. Zmeevski (Russian Federation) *(interpretation from Russian)*: The Russian Federation is grateful to the President of the International Tribunal for Rwanda for the report on the work of that body of international criminal justice for 1997-1998.

The Russian Federation attaches great importance to the work of the Rwanda Tribunal. It is our belief that the work of the Tribunal is a solid factor in the restoration and maintenance of peace and calm in Rwanda and the adjoining region. The Tribunal's judgements in the cases against Kambanda and Akayesu not only elicited a widespread political reaction, but were also an important factor in developing international criminal law. The Tribunal's decision finding Jean-Paul Akayesu guilty of genocide was the first international verdict on this crime in the history of the world.

Russia has supported the work of the United Nations to overcome the organizational, financial and staffing difficulties encountered by the International Tribunal for Rwanda. In the Security Council and in the General Assembly we clearly expressed our positive reaction to the proposals to enhance the effectiveness of the work of the Tribunal, *inter alia,* through establishing a third Trial Chamber.

A few days from now we will be electing to the Tribunal a new, larger group of judges, in accordance with Security Council resolution 1165 (1998), and they will be called upon immediately to start presiding over trials against a large number of accused who are now awaiting trial. We believe that with the establishment of the third Trial Chamber, the international community will be entitled to expect the Tribunal to work faster, thus evening the imbalance in the level of activity between the Rwanda and the Yugoslavia Tribunals. This approach will help avoid any impression of double standards in approaches to situations of flagrant and mass violations of international humanitarian law.

As can be seen from the report, during its four years of existence the Tribunal has handed down only two judgements. The trials of three indictees begun early last year are not yet completed, and the trials of some other indictees have not even started yet. At this stage there are indictments against more than 40 people, and about 30 people have actually been arrested and are being detained in Arusha awaiting trial — indeed, some have been awaiting trial for about three years. Trials have started for only five accused persons, and, as can be seen from the report, each trial tends to last about one and half to two years. If the Tribunal's pace of work continues unchanged, it is difficult to see how over the next 8 to 10 years it will be possible to complete the trials of the more than 30 indictees when the number of those being accused and indicted is constantly increasing.

The Security Council's decision to increase the number of judges and to create a third Trial Chamber does not mean that this situation will automatically improve. The new Trial Chamber will be able to start working only when another room for hearings has been built, so that the Prosecutor will be able to begin another trial in that Trial Chamber. It is difficult to see from the report of the Tribunal, unfortunately, what the situation is regarding the provision of conditions to ensure that the third Trial Chamber will be able to start functioning as soon as possible.

The Tribunal's report refers to the fact that during trials, for one reason or another, there are often breaks, or cases are adjourned, and the Trial Chambers are left idle. However, there are no specific comments in the report about what measures could be taken to avoid that situation or how to fill the gaps in the Court's schedule.

It would seem to us that the time could be used to begin and carry on other trials, but it is simply not clear from the report why the decisions taken by the judges in this matter have not been implemented.

There are a number of ways in which the effectiveness of the Tribunal's work could be improved. It seems to us that to ensure the effective work of the International Criminal Court, the procedures and working methods of its various structures must be improved and the shortage of administrative and technical staff must be redressed. The construction of the premises for the Tribunal have also to be arranged. We believe that if these measures are carried out, it will help the Tribunal quickly and fully to discharge the mandate entrusted to it.

Mr. Mangoaela (Lesotho): The world continues to witness unprecedented developments in the protection of the basic norms of humanitarian law and human rights. The ad hoc Tribunals have shown not only that an international criminal system is possible, but that it can be effective. By offering justice as an alternative to retribution, the Tribunals broke the cycle of violence and contributed to the process of reconciliation. Ultimately, the Tribunals will give way to a permanent court with authority to punish atrocities whenever, wherever and by whomever they are committed. The importance of these Tribunals as precedents for a permanent criminal court can thus not be underestimated. It is therefore essential that we ensure their success. More importantly, a historic step towards making the rule of law and the protection of human rights truly universal was taken as recently as July 1998, when the Rome Statute was adopted by an overwhelming majority of States participating in the Rome Conference. The adoption of the Statute has given renewed hope to the struggle for human rights and the fight against impunity.

Before commenting on the report before us, let me begin by thanking Judge Laïty Kama, President of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, for his clear and concise introduction of the third report of the Tribunal as contained in document A/53/429. We commend Judge Kama for his leadership of the Tribunal since 1994. We also commend all the other judges and the staff of the Rwanda Tribunal for their hard work.

Overall, the report highlights a number of significant developments that have taken place since the last report. We are happy to note that the Tribunal has safely navigated the rough shores and is now well on its way into the calm waters of the high seas. As the report indicates, 43 individuals have been formally indicted, 31 of whom have been apprehended and are awaiting trial. We urge States to cooperate with the Tribunal in apprehending the remaining suspects wherever they may be. It is particularly noteworthy that the Tribunal has handed down its first judgement and has recorded its first guilty plea. These developments demonstrate the hard work and dedication of the Tribunal's workforce. The guilty plea by former Prime Minister Jean Kambanda, the most senior official of the Interim Government during the height of the atrocities of 1994, vindicates the international community's long-held conviction not only that genocide was committed in Rwanda, but that it was planned at the highest level. The guilty plea sends a clear message to all those who participated in the mass murder of innocent people in Rwanda that their days are numbered.

We welcome the various measures taken to improve the administration and logistical support provided to the Chambers and the Prosecutor in the discharge of their functions. Among the improvements undertaken since the last report are extensions to the library, the upgrading of the satellite communications system, the building of the second courtroom and the systematic implementation of the recommendations of the Office of Internal Oversight Services, all of which are welcome developments which will further enhance the Tribunal's work.

We are all too familiar with the phrase "justice delayed is justice denied". Any unjustified delays in administering justice will have a negative impact on people's perception of the Tribunal. It is for this reason that we welcome the creation of the third Trial Chamber, which we trust will enable the Tribunal to carry out its functions more effectively and ensure that justice is speedily rendered to the victims and the survivors of the Rwanda tragedy. While we note that most delays are attributable to factors relating to the normal administration of criminal justice, we urge the Tribunal to continue with its innovative measures aimed at expediting proceedings.

The vitality of the Tribunal depends upon the cooperation of States in apprehending and transferring suspects, in permitting on-site visits and interviews with witnesses, and in securing documents. We commend all countries that have accorded full cooperation and assistance to the Tribunal. As the Nairobi-Kigali operation has clearly demonstrated, cooperation with and assistance to the Tribunal can bear fruitful results in bringing to justice those involved in genocide in Rwanda. In particular, we commend the valuable assistance extended to the Tribunal by the Governments of Rwanda, the United Republic of Tanzania, Kenya, Senegal, Côte d'Ivoire, the Central African Republic, Belgium, Cameroon and the Netherlands. The international community also bears the responsibility of sharing the burden of enforcing the Tribunal's sentences by accepting prisoners. We trust that more States will shortly express a willingness to accept convicted prisoners.

Finally, since inadequacy of resources cause delays in the Tribunal's administration of justice, we express our hope that the Tribunal will continue to receive stable and adequate financial, human and technical resources to ensure its effective functioning.

Mr. Sucharipa (Austria) *(interpretation from French)*: I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The Central and Eastern European countries associated with the European Union — Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia — the associated country Cyprus, and the European Free Trade Association country member of the European Economic Area the Principality of Liechtenstein align themselves with this statement.

The European Union wishes first of all to thank the President of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, Judge Laïty Kama, for his introduction of the annual report of the Tribunal covering the period 1 July 1997 to 30 June 1998. We congratulate the President, the Prosecutor and the Registrar of the Court for their work over the past year. The European Union conveys its appreciation also to the host countries — the United Republic of Tanzania, Rwanda and the Netherlands — for their continued support for the organs of the Tribunal.

As this is the third annual report of the Tribunal to the General Assembly, it would seem useful to give a brief historical overview. By its resolution 955 (1994) of 8 November 1994, the Security Council established the International Criminal Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Genocide and Other Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of Rwanda and Rwandan Citizens Responsible for Genocide and Other Such Violations Committed in the Territory of Neighbouring States between 1 January and 31 December 1994. In its resolution 978 (1995) of 27 February 1995, the Council urged States to arrest and detain persons found within their territory against whom there was sufficient evidence that they were responsible for acts of violence within the jurisdiction of the Tribunal.

Those two resolutions, adopted under Chapter VII of the Charter, are in themselves a reminder of the importance of the mandate that the international community has given the Tribunal. It is not simply a question of putting an end to impunity and ensuring that justice triumphs in respect of events of enormous gravity; it is a question also of preventing any recurrence of such events by ensuring, in a manner visible to all, justice that is rigorous and that strictly respects internationally recognized principles of criminal law. For justice to be done in this manner, the Tribunal must be able to function effectively. It is important also to stress the Tribunal's role in the process of national reconciliation.

The European Union is encouraged that a number of measures are under way to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the Tribunal's operation, pursuant to the first report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services of the Secretariat. We want to recall the importance that we attach to the recommendations of the Office of Internal Oversight Services. Nonetheless, we are disturbed by problems in the area of administration that were mentioned in the second report of the Tribunal and that still persist. But thanks to the vigorous efforts of the Secretary-General and the office of the President of the Tribunal, the Tribunal now seems to be in a position better to discharge the duties defined in its mandate.

The report lists a number of the measures that have been taken, of which I will touch on just a few. The Tribunal's Registry, which is responsible for managing all matters relating to human resources, was able in 1997 to hire 210 new staff members and renew the contracts of 189 others. Further recruitment is envisaged for the current year within the context of the budget authorized by the General Assembly, which, compared to the previous year's budget, provides for a significant and much needed increase in the number of posts.

With respect to the recruitment policy, where we believe some problems still exist, we would stress the importance of finding highly qualified personnel and of ensuring that the additional means made available to the Tribunal are used primarily to improve the conditions for the judicial work of the judges and prosecutors.

We also take note of the decision taken by the Security Council on 30 April 1998 to create a third Trial Chamber. Let me recall that the General Assembly will soon be electing the judges of the three Trial Chambers.

I am pleased to note that the Tribunal continues to receive voluntary contributions in cash and kind, including audio-visual materials, *inter alia*, from member States of the European Union. Moreover, some members of our Union have seconded staff to the Tribunal until 28 February 1999, the date on which the Secretary-General, pursuant to the relevant General Assembly resolutions, will be obliged to terminate the services of that category of staff. The Tribunal's library, an essential working tool, has been considerably expanded, and working conditions for library users improved. This is due in part at least to donations by several Governments, non-governmental organizations and national associations.

The judicial activities of the Tribunal, described in detail in the report, show that the Tribunal is now operating, in its own words, "at cruising speed". The European Union would like to stress once again that in order to carry out its work in an impartial manner, the Tribunal must continue to work totally independently from any and all political authorities. For that reason, the European Union, which continues to provide significant legal and logistical cooperation to the Tribunal, will refrain from commenting on the cases being considered in that forum. However, we would note that the first judgement ever handed down by an international court on the crime of genocide was that rendered by the Tribunal less than two months ago. Moreover, this year the Tribunal recorded the first guilty plea by an accused.

These events led the Secretary-General to state:

> "The success achieved by this Court in suppressing genocide is of historic scope and demonstrates the United Nations capacity to create institutions which respond to the highest aspirations of the human race."

Indeed, it is thanks to the Tribunal that 50 years after its adoption in the wake of the Holocaust, the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide has now become a concrete manifestation of the resolve of the international community to combat genocide as never before.

Because of some difficulties still persisting in the area of judicial assistance, the European Union would stress once again the need for all parties and all States fully to cooperate with the Tribunal so that it can effectively discharge its mandate. From this standpoint and without prejudging the merits of the cases, the European Union would note that a number of persons, including some who had occupied positions of authority in 1994, have been arrested in third countries following the issuance of arrest warrants by the Tribunal. The European Union sincerely hopes that these developments will continue and that the necessary administrative measures will be taken by the States concerned to enable the witnesses summoned by the Tribunal to travel there in order to appear before it. We trust also that the Tribunal will be able to speed up its judicial work, particularly in the case of long-time detainees.

In conclusion, the European Union would note that while there has been substantial progress, much remains to be done. Arrests have been made, but the people for whom arrest warrants have been issued are still at large; they must be detained. Moreover, the Tribunal must continue to provide information about its work in order to heighten public awareness — primarily in Rwanda but also in Member States as a whole, including the donor countries — of the importance of the mandate entrusted to the Tribunal, which is a reflection of the international community's condemnation of genocide and other grave violations of international humanitarian law.

The International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda set an important precedent with respect to the establishment of the International Criminal Court, whose Statute was adopted in Rome in July 1998, thereby opening up a new chapter in the process of bringing to justice the perpetrators of international crimes. The practical experience of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda will be a valuable resource in elaborating norms for the prosecution and punishment, at the international level, of grave violations of humanitarian law, regardless of where they are committed or by whom.

Awareness has also been heightened of the importance of giving victims access to the Tribunal and protecting them. The European Union would reiterate that the international community must continue fully to cooperate with the Tribunal and provide it the necessary resources to discharge its mandate fully. We would urge the Tribunal to continue tirelessly its efforts to bring to justice those who have participated in the commission of horrible crimes so that justice is not denied the victims and in order for a process of true national reconciliation to begin in Rwanda.

Mr. Díaz (Costa Rica) (*interpretation from Spanish*): There cannot be peace without justice; there cannot be reconciliation until the truth comes to light; and a free and democratic society cannot be built as long as criminals who have perpetrated the most hideous atrocities remain unpunished. Impunity poses a threat to peace because it incites the victims to vengeance and increases the arrogance of the perpetrators. In this context, my delegation believes that the existence of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda is a prerequisite for the much needed reconciliation in the Great Lakes region.

We are deeply gratified that the difficulties that had arisen with respect to the work of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda are being resolved. The Tribunal finally is trying cases on a continual basis. Its rulings, as well as its 150-plus decisions, represent significant steps in the development of international humanitarian law and international human rights law. Its jurisprudence has become authoritative in the interpretation of international common law and an impetus to the continued elaboration of that law in areas in which gaps or imprecisions still exist. We would note also that its very existence helped promote the adoption of the Rome Statute for the establishment of the International Criminal Court.

My delegation is concerned at the continuing difficulties with respect to the elaboration of a judicial timetable to ensure the early trial of all the defendants. The International Tribunal and the international community that established it must respect the defendants' fundamental right to a speedy trial. It was for this reason that my delegation, in its capacity as a Security Council member, supported the establishment of a third Trial Chamber, so that all the detained or indicted who are in the hands of the Tribunal can be judged promptly. We hope that the election of these judges in the near future and their assuming their functions will accelerate the judicial activities of the Tribunal.

Along these same lines we are gratified by the Tribunal's efforts to improve its effectiveness — including the rule modifications adopted in July of this year — in order to eliminate the causes of these unjustified delays. We believe that the Tribunal must continue these efforts in order to bring about additional improvements as regards procedural matters and its working methods as well as coordination with the Office of the Prosecutor.

We are pleased by the improvements in the logistic and administrative support for the Tribunal. We believe that this organ cannot be truly effective if it cannot rely on the necessary financial and human resources. This is an area in which we must all make greater efforts. The financial authorities of the United Nations and our own delegations will have to make greater efforts to secure for this Tribunal all the necessary resources.

My delegation cannot fail to avail itself of this opportunity to mention our concern about the situation of detainees and indictees held in Rwanda. We consider that Rwanda itself must bring to trial all the alleged perpetrators of criminal acts committed in 1994 who are not being prosecuted by the International Tribunal. The existence of this Tribunal does not absolve the Government of Rwanda from its primary obligation to administer justice and penalize the guilty. Nevertheless, we are seriously concerned by the tremendous number of detainees in the prisons of that country and the terrible conditions in which they are being held. We believe that greater efforts must be made to ensure that these prisoners are treated with dignity, as well as to strictly respect their legal rights to be brought to trial.

Similarly, we are concerned about the execution by the Rwandan authorities of several people convicted of committing acts of genocide and other violations of international humanitarian law. Costa Rica is opposed, in all circumstances, to capital punishment. The administration of justice must not violate the fundamental right to life of every human being. Therefore we urge these authorities to impose sentences consonant with the highest standards of respect for human rights.

Finally, allow me to place on record our full support for the work of the Tribunal and our recognition of the efforts of its President, Laïty Kama, and its members. Let me also thank the Secretary-General for preparing this third annual report.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item.

May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 50?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 24 (*continued*)

Implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s, including measures and recommendations agreed upon at its mid-term review

Report of the Secretary-General (A/53/390 and Add.1)

Mr. Mwakawago (United Republic of Tanzania): I would like to associate my delegation with the statement made by Indonesia on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. We support that statement whole-heartedly.

It is a privilege and great honour for me to address this Assembly on the important item on our agenda today, on the implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s. For more than a decade now, the development of Africa has preoccupied this Assembly, since the 1986 adoption of the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development 1986-1990 (UNPAAERD) at its thirteenth special session to the 1991 inauguration of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (UN-NADAF) — the subject of our debate today. While such efforts have been expanded to address Africa's developmental problems, the circumstances that led to the adoption of UNPAAERD and its successor, UN-NADAF, including the need for additional resource mobilization, are as valid today as they were when the two programmes were established.

Despite the enormous problems Africa continues to face today, the continent has the potential for growth and development. The statistics of the last three years have amply demonstrated such growth. That is why the region has embarked on an ambitious reform process aimed at harnessing that potential, taking cognizance of the fact that its development is, in the final analysis, the responsibility of Africans themselves. In this regard, Africa has taken the challenge and committed itself to implementing fully all policies and programmes aimed at creating an enabling environment for growth and development. In so doing, African countries have managed to halt the deteriorating economic trend and, in many cases, have even registered modest growth. What is now required is a supportive international environment in terms of increased financial resources and other mechanisms that will sustain that growth.

Africa needs to develop. And indeed it has to develop, for the good of humankind and the world. That is why it has embarked on the current process of reform and restructuring. However, in order to sustain this process, Africa needs increased resource flows. This is the only way that Africa can progress, and African progress is beneficial not only to African people but also to the world at large. Given the interdependent nature of the global economy today, progress in Africa will thus benefit all, including those who have come to its assistance. This is a fact, and it is being recognized in the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s.

The development efforts being made by African countries will be meaningful only if the international community builds a spirit of new partnership with Africa, comprehensively addressing its problems and searching for lasting solutions. It is at this juncture that we welcome the report of the Secretary-General on the causes of conflict and the promotion of peace and sustainable development in Africa. It is hoped that the report will provide additional impetus for the operationalization of UN-NADAF.

Africa is a continent of 53 States, and of the 48 least developed countries in the world, 33 are in Africa. This makes Africa the most backward continent in terms of development. Not surprisingly, therefore, Africa has dominated and continues to dominate the Security Council's agenda pertaining to peace and security matters.

The development of Africa is also greatly hampered by the unprecedented level of its external debt, which keeps growing each year. Statistics indicate that Africa's external indebtedness increased from $300 billion in 1992 to $332 billion in 1995, and it was $323 billion in 1996. With such an unsustainable level of external debt, it is difficult to have any meaningful capital transformation, which is a prerequisite for development. Africa therefore looks forward to the creation of a meaningful mechanism aimed at effectively addressing the debt problem.

Admittedly, the result of well-intended programmes, such as the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Debt Initiative of the Bretton Woods institutions, has proven disappointing because of the conditionalities and the sluggish pace of implementation. While Africa does not desire to dishonour its debt obligations, a cancellation of such a debt burden would release and make available to Africa the critical resources it needs to build appropriate infrastructures for its development.

In the area of trade, many African countries still depend on commodity trade as the major source of export earnings. However, their share of the global market has remained low and accounts for only two per cent of world trade. It is sad to note, as the 1997 report of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) suggests, that the 33 least developed countries of Africa, who have about 10 per cent of the world's population, export only 0.37 per cent of global exports and only 1.4 per cent of the developing countries' exports. Worse still, the impact on African countries of the implementation of the Uruguay Round is still ambiguous, particularly in the areas related to market access and agriculture and in the erosion of preferential treatment for Africa's commodity exports. As Africa moves to implement the World Trade Organization (WTO) rules on commodities, it is necessary, however, to grant a moratorium and therefore safeguard the preferential treatment African countries had enjoyed previously under the Lomé Convention. This would enable Africa to adjust to economic diversification, which is deemed necessary if it is to build its competitiveness on the world market.

It is eight years now since the implementation of UN-NADAF began, but Africa has very little to show from the programme's existence. The declining importance of primary commodities in world trade, coupled with loss of market share in world commodities, puts Africa in a comparatively weak position to benefit from globalization. The situation is aggravated further by declining resources, particularly the official development assistance that is essential in development of both human capital and physical infrastructure. To make matters worse, rules on technology transfer deprive African countries of the opportunity to adopt more modern technologies for their development; in the end, even their efforts towards industrialization are thwarted.

Consequently, it is obvious that globalization has not assisted African countries to increase their exports, let alone improve their incomes. The net result is accumulated debts, which are sustaining consumption rather than developmental needs. The debt issue, therefore, needs to be seriously addressed.

African countries have taken painful measures to restructure and to reform government laws and procedures in the hope that foreign direct investments would be forthcoming. However, such hopes have remained illusory as foreign direct investment flows have continued to bypass Africa. Indeed, this trend has invalidated, at least for Africa, the claim that increased foreign direct investment has compensated for official development assistance shortfalls. Although foreign direct investment flows to developing countries have been increasing, the opposite has been the case with Africa, where even the little that has been directed to the continent has been decreasing over the years.

For example, in 1995, the total net resource flows to developing countries was $243.1 billion, while Africa's share was only $28.1 billion. As for 1996, the total net resource flows to developing countries was $281.6 billion, out of which only $22.2 billion went to Africa. These statistics demonstrate clearly that Africa needs a new development strategy if the continent is to pull out of misery and underdevelopment.

By and large, Africa lacks the resources needed to undertake all the necessary restructuring and to build an infrastructure which can attract and support sustained flows of foreign direct investments. Even in rare cases where such infrastructure has been instituted, foreign direct investments have not been forthcoming, at least at the rate and levels which can impact positively and enable Africa to make an economic turnaround. This is partly due to the hesitancy of investors to venture into new and untested markets, notwithstanding the statistical fact that the level of returns on investments in Africa is one of the highest. That hesitancy could be a result of deep-seated prejudices engendered by the propaganda that Africa is a continent in which instability and conflict are endemic. In some cases, conflicts have plagued individual African countries, but these are very few.

We therefore remain convinced that UN-NADAF deserves the support of all. In this regard, we believe that Africa's development partners will continue supporting UN-NADAF and, in so doing, will be assisting African countries to mobilize the resources needed to set up investment-sustaining infrastructure and also will be developing an awareness that will help eliminate negative images which block increased foreign direct investment flows to Africa.

I wish to conclude by stating that Africa has had many initiatives over the past decade, but to no avail. Is it not about time that we asked ourselves what went wrong? Both Africa and the international community have to provide answers to this question. It is not enough to show empathy with the continent, although it is much needed, but concrete programmes and action are what Africa urgently needs.

Mr. Wilmot (Ghana): The state of implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (UN-NADAF), particularly following its mid-term review, signals a far from satisfactory level of commitment on the part of the international community to Africa's development.

In our view, General Assembly resolution 46/151 of 18 December 1991 and subsequent resolutions on the implementation of UN-NADAF constitute a collective compact between Africa and the international community. That compact identifies the respective responsibilities of African countries and those of the international community in addressing the development challenges in Africa in the context of our common interests.

As made clear by the progress report presented by the Secretary-General (A/53/390) in response to resolution 51/132 of 6 December 1996, and by recent worldwide surveys on economic and human development, the compact is currently like a three-legged table, a table with one leg missing — an unstable construct.

Paragraphs 11 and 12 of the Secretary-General's report paint a broad picture of the seriousness with which African countries have pursued their task of achieving sustainable development and integration into the world economy. The weaknesses identified by the report show that, where it is in their power, African countries have not shirked from any sacrifice or any commitment to shoulder their responsibilities.

In the face of limited budgetary resources arising from the need for prudence in government borrowing and the higher expenditure demands created by measures to strengthen capacity and by new institutions established under constitutional rule, the potential of unaided domestic action has been distorted or severely compromised. These limitations have highlighted the important role of foreign direct investments, official development assistance, trade and debt sustainability in providing or creating complementary resources as the catalysts to growth or to generate momentum in the economies of African countries.

To that end, many African countries, including my own, have enacted legislation, created some of the most attractive environments for investments and courted investors, local and foreign. Private capital flows to Africa, however, continue to account for a very small percentage of total flows to developing countries, with the continent receiving only 2.7 per cent of such flows in 1996. Even so, these flows are concentrated in a few countries and in a few sectors — mainly energy and mining — bypassing agriculture and manufacturing, where the potential for production linkages and value addition are greatest.

As regards official development assistance, the Secretary-General rightly recalls in paragraphs 94 to 97 of his report A/53/390 that, to achieve the objectives of UN-NADAF, it was estimated that a minimum amount of $30 billion in net official development assistance would be needed in 1992, after which it would have to increase at an average annual rate of 4 per cent to achieve a growth rate of at least 6 per cent per annum. This rate has since been revised upwards to 8 per cent to 10 per cent, to be able significantly to reduce poverty in the continent, which means an even higher volume of official development assistance resources than originally estimated. And yet, total official development assistance flows to Africa have been declining steadily, from $25 billion in 1992 to $20.7 billion in 1996, according to the Secretary-General's report A/53/390/Add.1.

It is difficult to understand why official development assistance levels should be declining to historical lows when some of the donor countries are enjoying surpluses. It is tempting to conclude that lack of political will is at the bottom of the issue, not lack of resources or competition for resources. Improvements in African export production have also failed to lift the continent's share of world trade above 2 per cent, due primarily to problems with market access. Africa is expected to be a loser from the results of the Uruguay Round of multilateral trade negotiations — which, ironically, was geared to the expansion of trade — because of the continent's weak institutional frameworks for implementation of the Round results, price uncertainties and higher interest rates affecting export financing.

Africa's debt burden also remains a critical factor. According to the Secretary-General's report A/52/871 to the Security Council on Africa, to service that debt fully, Africa is projected to spend this year as much as $33 billion, equivalent to 25 per cent of the continent's total export earnings.

The four areas I have outlined constitute the cross-cutting issues impeding the overall socio-economic progress of Africa. By failing to address these vital matters realistically, Africa's development partners must take some responsibility for the conditions which continue to affect the implementation of UN-NADAF.

We are happy to note, however, the commendable role being played by the organizations of the United Nations family and autonomous bodies brought into relationship with the United Nations to assist African countries in implementing programmes and projects to strengthen their socio-economic capacity. We note particularly, with satisfaction, the revision by the Committee for Programme and Coordination (CPC) this year of programme 6 of the United Nations medium-term plan, 1998-2001, entitled "Africa: New Agenda for Development", in relation to the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative for the Implementation of UN-NADAF.

We believe that that linkage and the recommendations made by the Secretary-General in his report on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa provide the basis for a concerted approach by the international community to Africa's development. It also provides an integrated framework for the review of UN-NADAF in the year 2002. The Agenda for Action, adopted at the just-ended second Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD II), solidifies this process of integration of the framework for action by all partners in Africa's development.

In this connection, we call for an intensification of the efforts being made by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), among others, in Africa, in the framework of the United Nations Special Initiative for Africa, to ensure harmonization and effectiveness. We believe that the focus of their activities should increasingly aim at creating synergies for regional integration. We also call on Africa's development partners of the developed world to use the framework of these commitments, to which they are parties, to build consensus in their respective domestic arena for Africa's development.

We believe that the assistance which the development partners need to deploy to Africa's cause is very meagre compared to their endowment, the spillover from a buoyant Africa and the moral imperative of saving millions from poverty, conflict and preventable death. In this connection we propose a dialogue, within the framework of UN-NADAF, to address enhanced capital flows to Africa through, *inter alia*, innovative uses of the guarantee systems of Ex-Imbanks and so on; special funds for investment; and the expansion of the capital base of the International Finance Corporation.

In his statement to the high-level meeting on renewal of the dialogue on strengthening international economic cooperation for development through partnership on 17 September 1998, Ghana's Deputy Minister of Trade and Industry called for special programmes to build up Africa's international trade and for unhindered market access for Africa. I wish to reiterate the call and add that fairness and justice require that, in the implementation of the built-in agenda of the Uruguay Round agreements, issues in the interest of developing countries, particularly those in Africa, should not be relegated to the distant future.

The way we resolve Africa's debt burden, especially official debt, will show how serious we are in our commitment to the implementation of the UN-NADAF. The easiest way to free Africa's human and economic potential is to convert all of its official debt to grants. Far from sending the wrong signals to the markets, such an action would confirm the reality of Africa's irreversible commitment to prudent economic management and good governance.

Before concluding, we wish to draw particular attention to the critical issues outlined in section III of the Secretary-General's report, A/53/390, concerning the negative impact of globalization of the world economy on the continent of Africa, the need for enhanced coordination and feedback between the global political process and the operational levels in the field, mobilization of financial resources, the appropriateness of an independent evaluation of the implementation of the New Agenda and the need for harmonization of current international and bilateral initiatives on Africa.

Africa has made its choice to move forward to peace and prosperity. It is up to the rest of the world to decide whether that process will be sustainable and whether its enormous potential for the peace and prosperity of the world itself will be grasped and nurtured.

Mr. Koosaletse (Botswana): My delegation welcomes the Secretary-General's progress report on the implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (UN-NADAF). The report contains a very detailed analysis of constraints that continue to impede the economic development of Africa. We fully share the view that there is a need to further intensify efforts to accelerate the implementation process.

While some progress has been made since the launching in 1996 of the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative on Africa, designed to operationalize the UN-NADAF, it is disturbing that many of the critical social and economic problems that led to the adoption of that framework still persist today. The performance of sub-Saharan African economies has improved only marginally, and their integration into the international trading system is still a long way from being realized, in spite of the laudable efforts being exerted by Governments towards institutional reform measures, the liberalization of trade and financial regimes and their embracing, by and large, of market-driven economic strategies.

The mid-term review of the UN-NADAF affords us an opportunity, within that framework, to initiate dialogue on how African economies can best be assisted to respond to the expected ripple effects of the Asian financial crisis. Obviously, commodities destined for the Asian market will be adversely affected, resulting in reduced foreign exchange earnings. The impact of loss of income on societies already on the margins of survival threatens to erode the progress achieved so far. Africa cannot afford such an economic reversal.

It is noteworthy that this review of the UN-NADAF coincides with consideration of the Secretary-General's report of April 1998 on the causes of conflict and promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa. Botswana supports the incorporation of some of the recommendations put forward in that report into the existing UN-NADAF framework. We believe the challenge of addressing the links between peace and development is a vital part of the debate on these initiatives on Africa.

While the numerous initiatives on Africa are appreciated, not least because they are an indication that the international community is concerned about the problems of Africa, Botswana considers it important that the various activities should be harmonized through the collaboration of all partners in order to avoid unnecessary duplication, to ensure the efficient use of resources and to maximize the impact of the programmes and projects carried out under those initiatives in the recipient countries. In this regard, it is worth noting that there has been an improvement in the operational activities of the United Nations system which has made it better equipped to discharge its responsibilities. Coherence of United Nations activities in Botswana is seen in terms of bringing about less duplication of effort and, hopefully, savings that could benefit other development activities as prioritized in our National Development Plan. Otherwise, Botswana continues to benefit from the good partnership it has with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and its sister agencies.

It is important in any review exercise to have a clear idea of performance indicators that serve as a guideline to effective evaluation. In this regard, we urge Member States to cooperate with the United Nations in providing accurate information and other data necessary for such an undertaking.

The issue of lack of funding for the UN-NADAF has once again been succinctly outlined in the Secretary-General's report, and my delegation is deeply concerned about the failure of the international community to support this important initiative. We are convinced that funding for this initiative can be easily raised only if the international community can muster the political will to do so. We appeal to the international community to redouble its efforts in support of the UN-NADAF.

Botswana shares the view that trade expansion through the broadening of the export base is critical to any debate on sustainable development in Africa. In this connection, Botswana joins those States which call for a multilateral trading system which can redress the anomalies in the current trading system. It is also necessary that Africa be assisted in strengthening both its trade and financial infrastructures in readiness for its full integration into the global economy. To this end, regional economic cooperation plays a very important role in the facilitation of exports, particularly from small- and medium-scale industries. The support it offers to small internal markets such as our own is also very critical. The Southern African Development Community (SADC) thus deserves the support of the international community in the implementation of its regional programme.

The Botswana Government has embraced the private sector and civil society as partners in the development process. The three are stakeholders in the economy and possess a remarkable potential in the war against unemployment and poverty. The intention is to strengthen these partnerships in the years to come.

My delegation is confident that the goals set out in UN-NADAF are achievable. Africa should continue to spare no efforts to accomplish them. While the contribution of the international community is critical to the implementation of UN-NADAF, the onus rests on Africa to do the rest.

It is our hope that great strides will have been made in the implementation of UN-NADAF by both Africa and the international community by the next reporting period.

Mr. Kolby (Norway): Norway fully concurs with the views expressed by the Secretary-General in his report entitled "The causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa" (A/52/871). Africa's challenges have to be addressed in a comprehensive manner. Peace, stability and development are indeed closely interlinked.

Last week the Trade and Development Board of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) considered its contribution to the implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (UN-NADAF). UNCTAD recognized that the economic recovery which began in Africa in 1994 has proved to be fragile. It is evident that most African nations are not in a position to take sufficient advantage of the globalization process. They are still lagging behind the 6 per cent growth rate set by UN-NADAF.

There are a number of reasons for the constraints encountered by African countries in the global economy, such as lower commodity prices, lack of diversification, insufficient access to markets in developed countries, the unsustainable debt burden and declining official development assistance. This situation may be further aggravated by the more recent slowdown in the world economy.

Norway has on a number of occasions stated that national Governments have a prime responsibility for the development of their countries through sound macroeconomic policies, respect for human rights, good governance, openness and transparency. We note that African countries have implemented reform programmes and encourage them to pursue this path. At the same time, it is also imperative that sound domestic policies be supported by a friendly, inclusive international economic environment.

Norway has recently taken steps to contribute to such an economic environment for the developing countries in general and African countries in particular.

One of the main obstacles to economic and social development in Africa is the debt burden. The Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Debt Initiative represents the most far-reaching scheme for debt cancellation to date. However, we are sensitive to the demands for more flexibility in the eligibility criteria and for having the implementation of the HIPC mechanism speeded up. We intend to contribute to the strengthening of the HIPC through the recently launched Norwegian debt relief strategy, which would benefit a substantial number of African countries.

The Norwegian strategy to promote the private sector in developing countries has as a prime aim the stimulation of private investments, which are essential for the development of a dynamic business sector in African economies.

Within the World Trade Organization (WTO), Norway will continue to attach high priority to the concerns of the poorest countries. We are actively supporting the follow-up of the recommendations of last year's WTO high-level meeting for least developed countries and the UNCTAD/International Trade Centre/WTO joint Integrated Technical Assistance Programme for Selected Least Developed and other African Countries.

Norway has on a number of occasions called for reversing the present decline in official development assistance from North to South. The Norwegian Government is currently working on a plan to increase Norwegian development assistance in the years ahead. Special emphasis will be placed on increased cooperation with our African partners. Sectors of particular interest are poverty alleviation, improved delivery of social services and debt reduction.

The follow-up to the report by the Secretary-General must inspire us to more vigorous efforts for the development of Africa. We must utilize and further improve the existing multilateral mechanisms in this endeavour. It is essential that all United Nations institutions coordinate and support each other in this task.

In this context, we look forward to the next review of UN-NADAF.

Mr. Valle (Brazil): The Secretary-General's report on the progress made in the implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (UN-NADAF) constitutes a comprehensive summary of undertakings and a useful set of further recommendations for the strengthening of international commitments and shared responsibility towards Africa.

The report combines correct doses of optimism and realism by pointing out some concrete positive developments and at the same time assessing frustrated efforts and some structural challenges that the African continent still faces.

It is important to ensure that the progress made in the economic and social fields in Africa in the last few years is consolidated and deepened. Such progress includes macroeconomic policy reforms, lower fiscal deficits, qualitative improvement of budgetary allocations, increased foreign capital flows, higher growth rates and per capita income rise. These achievements must be safeguarded against the negative impact of the current systemic financial crisis.

The United Nations plays a crucial role in mobilizing and coordinating support and in promoting concrete actions in favour of African countries. In order to make a difference in areas such as trade, finance, technical cooperation, capacity-building and social development, the United Nations system must continue to implement specific assistance initiatives, in cooperation with relevant regional organizations and with the Bretton Woods institutions.

The success of UN-NADAF, however, will rely ultimately on the political will of Governments, in particular of multilateral and bilateral donor countries, to strengthen their cooperation with Africa. In this context, urgent solutions must be found to tackle the continued decline of official development assistance flows in recent years.

South-South cooperation is also an important tool which can be further promoted. Middle-income countries such as Brazil have been playing a relevant role in favour of Africa. Brazil has been deploying significant efforts, through the Brazilian Cooperation Agency and other national institutions, to share with African nations its own experience in the struggle for development.

At present, more than 21 per cent of Brazilian bilateral projects for technical cooperation among developing countries are channelled to cooperation with African countries. Brazil has been cooperating with African countries in a number of strategic areas, such as capacity-building, health, education, management of agricultural policies, tropical agriculture, electric power generation, monitoring and exploration of mineral resources. Some of these activities are under way through bilateral and triangular programmes or are under consideration within multilateral initiatives, such as the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries.

The report of the Secretary-General on Africa was previously the subject of another item on the agenda, and we have already presented our comments on it. We concur with the integration of development concerns in Africa into a broader perspective that lays the foundation for durable peace, economic growth and sustainable development.

Mr. Gambari (Nigeria): I am speaking towards the end of this debate as the current Chairman of the African Group to thank all delegations for their supportive statements on this agenda item. In that capacity too, I wish to recall that at the commencement of this decade — in 1991 to be precise — the desire of the international community to halt and reverse the process of economic recession in many African countries led to the adoption by the General Assembly of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (UN-NADAF). Bearing in mind the failure of an earlier programme — the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development, 1986-1990 — the New Agenda reflected a strong determination on the part of African countries and on the part of their development partners that economic growth and development should be meaningfully promoted in order to alleviate poverty in our continent.

However, the economic situation in many countries in the continent remains highly intolerable and very unsatisfactory. The lacklustre performance of the economies of many African countries was well underscored in the mid-term review of implementation of UN-NADAF in 1996, which among other things reminded the international community that it must more faithfully fulfil its commitment to the Agenda.

Notwithstanding the call, in resolution 51/32 on the mid-term review of the implementation of UN-NADAF, for increased commitment by the international community, the most recent report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of UN-NADAF, contained in document A/53/390, continues to show weak support by development partners for the development efforts of African countries. As we count down to the next millennium in a world economy characterized by the apparently irreversible phenomenon of globalization, there is an urgent need to find lasting solutions to the critical economic problems of Africa. The case for this remains very strong while the Governments of African countries continue to provide and consolidate the necessary enabling environment for development. Between now and 2002, when the next and final review of UN-NADAF will be due, the international community should definitely show greater political commitment to the implementation of measures in areas that are critical for the attainment of sustainable economic growth and development in African countries.

The African continent is currently one of the regions in the world where returns on foreign investment are highest, according to a recent study by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. Ironically, however, it is the region receiving the least foreign direct investment. African countries have undertaken measures to improve laws and regulations governing foreign direct investment. Foreign direct investment is needed in all sectors of African countries engaged in reform. The more the increase in foreign direct investment, the better the chances of consolidating economic reforms, creating more job opportunities and reducing the level of poverty.

We believe that sustainable development is not compatible with debt peonage or a heavy debt burden. Over the years, the burden of debt servicing has diverted substantial financial resources away from development in many African countries. The various debt strategies put in place so far by the international community, including the recent Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Debt Initiative, have proved to be of limited value in addressing the disturbing and unacceptable external debt problems of African countries. We believe that solutions can be found when there is appropriate and strong political will. African countries have started to take adequate internal measures to address the problems of external debt management. We therefore urge creditor countries to convert into grants all the remaining official debts of the poorest African countries. The international community should also, without further delay, put in place an international agreement to clear the entire debt stock of the poorest countries in our continent. The development efforts of African countries will continue to be frustrated so long as those countries remain in the straitjacket of external indebtedness.

In addition to the debt overhang of most African countries, the flow of development assistance has in recent years virtually dried up, at a time it is most needed to strengthen the process of economic reform. Foreign aid has declined in volume and in value when it is particularly required to complement national efforts towards the development of the social and infrastructure sectors of the economy. We commend the efforts of those countries that have reached or surpassed the internationally agreed target for aid flow to developing countries. African countries are currently consolidating their capacities for the mobilization of internal resources for development. In the interim, a predictable increase in the flow of financial assistance is urgently needed to make it possible to implement measures in priority areas of development. The prospects for more efficient utilization of foreign aid are very high in the emerging environment of good governance and accountability in many countries in our continent.

May I at this point reiterate firmly that the lack of market access for the export of our products constitutes one of the major current impediments to the promotion of sustainable economic growth and development in Africa. Regrettably, Africa's share of the global market has remained at about 2 per cent of world trade. The Uruguay Round of multilateral trade negotiations notwithstanding, the many agricultural products from African countries, including textiles, continue to encounter various forms of barrier in the markets of developed countries. As a matter of urgency, these barriers should be speedily dismantled by the developed countries and access should be granted to products from African countries. Additionally, the international community should in a more meaningful way assist African countries to diversify their exports in order to augment and stabilize foreign exchange earnings at predictable levels for development. It is our conviction that foreign trade is the most vital engine for sustainable economic growth and development. Therefore, the international community should help African countries to release the energies in this sector for their development.

The pursuit of expanded opportunities for foreign trade is a key element of our collective efforts to promote greater regional and subregional economic cooperation and integration in Africa. Indeed, regional and subregional integration efforts constitute important collective strategies for the acceleration of economic growth and development in our continent. These efforts and arrangements, including for example the African Economic Community, the Economic Community of West African States, the Southern African Development Community and so on, broadly aim at the development of the industrial, agricultural and infrastructure sectors of African economies. Varying progress has been made in the integration processes of these communities. However, their effective future consolidation will hinge on more financial and technical support from the international community. The strengthening of regionalism in Africa will facilitate the competitiveness of African countries in the world economy and ease their integration into the process of true globalization.

Allow me to mention that the adoption of several multilateral initiatives for development in Africa is not the whole crux of the matter in terms of the long-term development of the continent. Indeed, the multiplicity of such initiatives may in fact become counter-productive if left unfettered as priorities shift from one initiative to another while the efforts themselves remain uncoordinated. In order to facilitate the process of sustainable development and economic growth in Africa, the international community should harmonize the objectives and strategies of bilateral and multilateral initiatives. Specifically, and perhaps above all, additional and sufficient financial resources should be available to the United Nations system for the implementation of specific programmes under these initiatives aimed at promoting sustainable development in African countries.

In conclusion, the next three years will be very critical for UN-NADAF and for its impact on the promotion of sustainable growth and development in Africa, particularly at a time when the issue of the root causes of African conflicts is being seriously addressed by the General Assembly and by the international community. The global economy is undergoing major transformations, whose benefits tend to accrue to the developed countries and whose disadvantages tend to affect the economically weak developing countries.

The implementation of UN-NADAF by the developed partners regarding external factors critical to development calls for increased and sustained political will. We must accept the reality that the world is now inescapably a global village and that the genuine promotion of development in Africa will therefore be for the mutual benefit of all of us: rich and poor, small and large, developed and developing countries of the world.

Finally, in view of the importance which Africa attaches to UN-NADAF as a vital instrument for assisting in the social and economic development of our continent, a draft resolution will be introduced on the subject and submitted to the General Assembly for its consideration and adoption at a later date.

Mr. Kiwanuka (Uganda): The Uganda delegation welcomes the Secretary-General's progress report on the implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (UN-NADAF). We commend him for that thorough analysis.

African development continues to be a major concern for many African countries and for their development partners. The United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s is one of many initiatives on African development by the United Nations. These include the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative on Africa, whose aim was to serve as the United Nations implementation arm of UN-NADAF.

As we all know, UN-NADAF was a mutual commitment by African countries and their development partners to take specific actions in selected areas to promote sustained economic growth and sustainable development during the 1990s. For African countries, such selected areas included economic reforms, the intensification of the democratic process, regional cooperation and integration and South-South cooperation, human resources development, population and development, agricultural and rural development, environmental protection, investment promotion, and the increased role of civil society, particularly the non-governmental organizations.

On their part, Africa's development partners expressed their commitment to support the efforts of African countries. Specifically, they were called upon to facilitate the solution to Africa's debt problem and increase resource flows by ensuring that net official development assistance, which amounted to $30 billion in 1992, grew by 4 per cent in real terms thereafter, providing market access, supporting economic diversification and encouraging foreign direct investment to Africa.

As we approach the final review of UN-NADAF in 2002, it is appropriate to take stock now and ask the question: what does the balance sheet show?

On the African side and in spite of setbacks which are sometimes quite serious, there have been significant achievements in a number of areas which were of great concern at the beginning of the decade. During the decade many African countries embarked on political and economic reforms, and there is a growing recognition of the role of the private sector. As part of this broad economic reform process, open markets, privatization and the stabilization of currencies have been championed. Economic growth in sub-Saharan Africa has tripled since 1990, and some countries have had growth rates of up to 10 per cent a year.

Allow me at this stage to say something about Uganda's experience under the leadership of President Museveni. During the past 12 years, Uganda's economy has grown at an average rate of 6.5 per cent a year. Inflation has been reduced from 250 per cent in 1986 to single digits today. The gross domestic product has doubled. Industry has grown at an average rate of 15.1 per cent a year, and agriculture too has grown at 6.3 per cent a year. Because of the introduction of universal primary education as a result of President Museveni's commitment in his election manifesto, enrolments in primary schools have doubled since 1996, from 2.9 million children to 5.5 million today.

Political reforms in Africa, especially the strengthening of democracy, have also taken place in spite of the ongoing crises. For our part in Uganda a massive campaign to empower the people is under way. During this period, Ugandans wrote their own Constitution. Power was decentralized from the centre to the local councils, and the frontiers of democracy have been extended and expanded as never before. The climax of this was the decision by Uganda's head of State, President Museveni, to submit himself to the will of the Ugandan electorate. No other leader since independence has ever submitted himself to the electorate of Uganda.

But these achievements do not mean that the problems of Uganda and of Africa have gone away. Poverty still persists, and the agricultural sector is still unmodernized. The result is that Africa is still trapped in the role of a primary commodity exporter.

The huge burden that Africa's external debt has placed on the economies of Africa is unbearable. Africa's total debt as of 1995 was $392 billion. This massive debt overhang has been, and continues to be, a major obstacle to economic growth on the continent as a whole. Although growth rates have improved from 2.7 per cent in 1995 to 4 per cent in 1996, these are still fragile.

There must be resistance to the idea of a permanent category of poor countries in terms of the debt issue. Any proposal made must be viewed as a means to allow African nations to return to solvency and liquidity. In this regard, the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Debt Initiative must not be seen by African Governments as the latest panacea for all Africa's problems. A speedy, flexible, case-by-case approach will allow more African countries to qualify for assistance under the HIPC Initiative. This must be seen as a way out of persistent external indebtedness and a return to vigorous growth.

Here allow me to echo the recommendation of the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, that there should be an across-the-board conversion into grants of all the official debts of African countries. This may sound like a far-reaching proposal, but it is not new. It has been made at numerous international forums, notably at meetings of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development and of the Development Committee of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. Again in his report to the Security Council in April this year, the Secretary-General not only forcefully proposed the conversion into grants of all remaining official bilateral debt of the poorest African countries, he also urged the Bretton Woods institutions to significantly ease and quicken access to facilities for those heavily indebted poor countries and to provide sufficient resources to enable them to attain a substantial and sustained pace of economic and social development.

The benefit of debt cancellation, for example, is that if African Governments were relieved of the stress of debt overhang, they could better utilize their resources for economic development. There is also a moral argument associated with the concept of a total debt write-off. The so-called jubilee argument has been made by religious leaders recently. The Lambeth Conference of Anglican bishops in a recent statement on debt said that their lordships embraced the principle of debt cancellation and called on the World Bank to consider the cancellation of those loans.

In discussing market-access issues, we must stress that Africa's trading opportunities will depend on the extent to which the continent's trading pattern is integrated into the world trading system and its productive capacity. However, it is important to note that Africa's share of world trade continues to decline.

Estimates indicate that the declines in 1996 and 1997 were about 2 per cent and 1.9 per cent respectively. In 1997 the volume of world trade increased by 9.4 per cent, and Africa's trade volume increased by 8 per cent. This increase in export volume was fuelled by an increase in oil production, which was estimated at 66.8 million tons for 1997.

Let me now turn to the need for industrialization. Industrial development is a key element of sustainable economic growth. It helps countries to achieve important social objectives such as jobs, employment and equity. It creates opportunities for the integration of women. Along with agricultural development in rural areas, it can help stem migration and relieve pressure on cities. With industrial development the continent can take decisive steps towards full-throttle competition in the globalized marketplace. But without it, as African leaders declared at the 1997 Organization of African Unity (OAU) summit in Harare, African economies will be condemned to persistent crisis, dependence on humanitarian relief and deepening poverty, despair and political unrest.

In 1997, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization focused on the development of small- and medium-scale industries. Given the prominence of the private sector, it was quite appropriate that the theme for the celebration of Africa Industrialization Day in 1997 was the development of small- and medium-scale industries. Such enterprises are the backbone of economic activity in Africa. They are a major source of livelihoods and income. The majority of them are small- and medium-sized, but they account for a large share of the jobs created in the economy. Many are individual or family-owned operations with a great ability to adjust rapidly to changing market conditions. With trade liberalization and deregulation the role of these small- and medium-sized enterprises has increased tremendously. In both the formal and informal sectors, small entrepreneurs are playing a pivotal role in alleviating poverty and promoting economic progress.

As regards regional cooperation, in recent years a global consensus has emerged on the need for closer regional cooperation and integration so as to overcome the small, unintegrated African markets and so that we are able to face up to the challenges of the 1990s. In addition to the recognition that regional cooperation and integration are absolute necessities for Africa in the coming years, there is a broad consensus today on a number of principles that could guide the new phase of regionalism in Africa. But for regional integration to take place, a number of key factors are essential, including macroeconomic policies, broader civil participation and regional policies to ensure redistribution of benefits.

A number of developments indicate that the "new" regionalism in Africa today may have a better chance of success than previous attempts. It has not only the advantage of being able to draw lessons from past experiences in Africa and elsewhere, but also the benefit of a more favourable international environment. The new regional groupings such as the Economic Community of West African States, the Southern African Development Community, the East African Cooperation, the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa and so forth have benefitted from past experiences.

Uganda recognizes that the success of regional initiatives ultimately hinges on the will of Africa itself. Nevertheless, external support in the form of financial and technical cooperation is being called upon to play an essential role. This includes providing assistance to regional transport and communication networks, as well as to support services, capacity-building and the removal of barriers to trade and factor movements; better monetary cooperation; and, more generally, an international trading environment that is conducive to the integration efforts of African countries.

Let me now turn to conflicts. In his report, "The causes of conflicts and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa", the Secretary-General put a finger on a major hindrance to African development. Many African leaders have long shared with the international community alarm at the persistence of deadly conflicts and humanitarian crises. The risk is that Africa gets locked in an endless process of crisis management. This is a real danger because lurching from one crisis to another makes it difficult to focus attention on the long-term structural transformations that are required for sustainable economic and social development. Unfortunately, serious focus by the international community on Africa has diminished. The slowness of the Security Council and the international community to respond to the steady deterioration in the security and humanitarian situation in many parts of Africa is a matter of great concern. Needless to say, we call upon the international community to support and strengthen the OAU Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution.

Finally, let me express my delegation's satisfaction with the Secretary-General's progress report and conclude on a note of promising development which truly represents the spirit of global partnership with Africa. Early this year, President Clinton visited Africa. The visit was a turning point in United States policy towards Africa. A joint communiqué was issued at the end of the Entebbe Summit for Peace and Prosperity in March 1998 which eight heads of State or Government attended. The fact that eight heads of State or Government signed the communiqué was significant, because they committed themselves to putting partnership into practice and to build those partnerships on principles and shared values. They said,

> "The Heads of State and Government recognize that to effect this new, genuine and transparent partnership, there is a need to commit ourselves to the identification and acknowledgement of both our mutual and divergent interests, the pursuit of free and frank discussions and a clear understanding of the roles and responsibilities of each partner." *(S/1998/307, annex, third paragraph)*

They went on to say,

> "The Heads of State and Government recognize that a lasting partnership must be built on the principles of shared ownership, joint responsibility and full transparency." *(ibid., fourth paragraph)*

Mr. Mabilangan (Philippines): Let me first join other delegations in congratulating the Secretary-General on his excellent reports on agenda item 24 of the present session. My delegation fully associates itself with the statement by the representative of Indonesia, who spoke on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

With the adoption of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (UN-NADAF), the international community unequivocally committed itself to supporting the development efforts of all countries in Africa. The New Agenda and its subsequent mid-term review are clear on the efforts required to put the countries of the African continent on the road to economic recovery and prosperity.

The African countries themselves have made their best efforts to contribute their part in revitalizing their economy and sustaining the process of their development despite financial and other serious constraints. In this regard, it may be instructive to refer to the progress report of the Secretary-General on this subject, which indicated, among other things, that, since the mid-term review, African countries have deepened the progress that had previously been achieved in several fields.

It is critical, however, that the development process now under way in the African continent must not be curtailed or reversed so that real progress in terms of uplifting the material conditions of the peoples of Africa will continue. It is therefore critical that appropriate action be implemented at the international level to insulate them from the financial crisis raging in some parts of the world.

At the same time, it is important for the international community to see to it that all the required measures identified in UN-NADAF and in its mid-term review are carried out to the fullest.

Among other measures, these require the promotion of the private sector and foreign direct investment in the African countries, the expansion of market access for the export products of African countries, diversification of African economies and commodities, the provision of adequate and predictable sources of external financing and the resolution of the serious external indebtedness of many African countries.

As reported in document A/53/390, since the mid-term review certain African countries have encouraged privatization as an instrument of resource mobilization, while others have created a more enabling environment for attracting foreign direct investment. My delegation certainly encourages them to persist in the efforts aimed at promoting private sector participation in their economies. We also encourage the enhancement of foreign direct investment for the development of Africa. In this regard, the international community, including the financial institutions, must provide the necessary support, involving a wide range of measures, including the improvement of the physical, institutional and social infrastructures in order to attract further foreign and domestic investments.

According to the report of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), Africa ships only about 0.37 per cent of global exports and about 1.4 per cent of exports from the developing world. It is clear that unless the African countries are accorded the opportunity to expand their earning potential through the exports of their goods and services, there is not much hope for a sustained path to progress in the continent. The UN-NADAF and its mid-term review contain specific references for concrete action that must be implemented to support the exports of the countries in Africa. My delegation therefore calls on the international community, particularly the developed countries, to implement measures that would expand market access for the products of the African countries.

The effective mobilization of financial resources is extremely necessary for the African continent. Unless sufficient resources are at the disposal of African countries, it will be impossible to sustain the process under way for the revitalization of their economies. It is thus troubling to note the observation in document A/53/390/Add.1 that gross domestic savings have been consistently declining in Africa. It is equally disquieting to note that Africa's share of total resource flows to developing countries not only was reduced from 15.4 per cent in 1992 to 7.4 per cent in 1996, but also has fluctuated from year to year, the main reason for which, of course, was the declining trend of official development assistance.

Closely related to the mobilization of resources is the question of providing a definitive resolution to the enormous external indebtedness of many African countries. Again, unless a durable solution to their external debt and debt-servicing problems is in place, there will be a considerable drain in the resources which could otherwise be channelled to support development efforts. In this regard, I wish to refer to what I indicated in my statement on agenda item 164, "Causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa": that serious consideration should be accorded to the Organization of African Unity's framework for action on debt, which called for an international agreement to clear the entire debt stock of the poorest countries in Africa within a reasonably short period of time, and in the context of Africa's overall economic reforms.

The Secretary-General himself noted that

> "Significant movement on lifting Africa's crippling debt burden will require concerted political action at the highest levels." *(A/52/871, para. 95)*

The road to economic recovery and the required measures to sustain the path to development in the African continent have been well laid out in UN-NADAF and in its mid-term review. The international community needs only to be conscientious with regard to the commitments embodied in those documents and thereby dutifully make the best efforts to support Africa's development.

I am confident that our solidarity with all the peoples of the continent of Africa will provide the required momentum aimed at the full and effective implementation of the New Agenda.

Mr. Chulkov (Russian Federation) (*interpretation from Russian*): Russia attaches great importance to all forms of cooperation that can help to ensure the development of countries and regions. We consider the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (UN-NADAF), adopted by the General Assembly in 1991, to be a basic document for conjoining national efforts with the activities of the United Nations system with a view to the comprehensive development of the African continent. We support such key goals of UN-NADAF as coordinating efforts at the national, regional and international levels; ensuring that the development of Africa becomes one of the international community's priorities; and helping to establish conditions conducive to development efforts being made in Africa.

The Russian delegation welcomes the growing participation of African States in world affairs and their constructive contribution to strengthening international and regional security. We happily note the positive trends in the sphere of political and economic reform and the establishment of integration mechanisms in Africa.

The General Assembly's recent consideration of the item on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa confirmed that the success of the strategy lies in the settlement of the numerous conflicts in Africa and in ensuring the political stabilization of the region. Helping to settle inter-State and internal conflict situations in the region is a priority of Russian policy in Africa.

UN-NADAF reflects the desire of the African countries and the international community to develop cooperation as a contribution to promoting sustainable development. Our delegation largely agrees with the conclusions of the mid-term review of the programme and believes that, in order to accomplish this task, Governments, local governing bodies, non-governmental organizations and the international community need to unite their efforts.

Responsibility for development and for building effective economic policy lies — quite appropriately, in our view — with countries themselves. At the same time, a very important role in the process is played by international cooperation and the establishment of conditions conducive to development. This is particularly topical in the case of African countries, many of which, with every good intention, are simply unable by themselves, in today's circumstances, to break out of the vicious circle of socio-economic problems exacerbated by the burdens and consequences of the current global financial and economic crisis.

Given the current realities, one of the foremost tasks of the international community in helping Africa is to make the best choice of priorities. Russia reconfirms its position on the advisability of shifting attention from emergency humanitarian assistance to support for long-term projects that will strengthen and develop the countries' own creative potential. We believe that it is important to continue to seek ways of reducing the debt burden of the African States and to provide conditions in which their products enjoy access to markets.

I would mention, as an example of the Russian contribution to the development of African countries, the work carried out in Africa by our Ministry of Civil Defence, Emergencies and Natural Disasters. In particular, I would point to the successful automotive school project in Rwanda, aimed at promoting national capacities in the delivery of humanitarian supplies in Africa, which is already developing at the regional level.

An important element of the successful development of African economies is strengthening coordination between donor countries and various international institutions to ensure more coordinated work in the implementation of decisions of the United Nations global conferences. Through multilateral and bilateral cooperation in Africa, a whole series of mutually reduplicating programmes are being implemented. In this connection, we feel it very important to avoid any dissipation of effort and would recommend, in implementing this task, enhancing the United Nations coordinating role in providing assistance to Africa. We also advocate the more active involvement of certain agencies, including the World Bank, in implementing the United Nations Special Initiatives on Africa.

Russia welcomes the African development initiatives that bolster UN-NADAF. In particular, we note the results of the recent second Tokyo International Conference on African Development. The final document adopted there, entitled "African Development Towards the 21st Century: The Tokyo Agenda for Action", shows a growing understanding of the fact that finding a solution to the problems of Africa is becoming a priority task for the world community. We support the statement made by the Russian Federation at the Tokyo Conference to the effect that Russia is ready to participate in projects in Africa, including international ones, especially in the humanitarian area and in demining.

The Acting President: I should like to inform members that a draft resolution on this item will be submitted to the Secretariat at a later date.

The meeting rose at 6.10 p.m.